

# Translating Japanese Texts

## 日本文の翻訳

KIRSTEN REFSING AND LITA LUNDQUIST



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and  
Lita Lundquist*

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# Preface

The present book is the result of a joint project. The ambition of the two authors has been to create a practical textbook on problems of and strategies for translation of Japanese texts, aimed at both students and teachers of translation, and professional translators. The theoretical foundation is that texts are created by means of interplay between linguistic material – from all levels – and pragmatic and cognitive mechanisms, and that all translation should therefore take such factors into consideration. The book focuses on Japanese and English and attempts to highlight systematic differences between these two languages. It is hoped, however, that the book may also be of use to students of translation in general, since the problems addressed are common to everyone engaged in the task of translating from one language into another.

Our book came into being as the result of a fortuitous encounter between one of the authors' search for a practical tool for teaching translation, and a small book written in Danish by the other (Lundquist 2007). The original book was aimed at language students at university level in the Scandinavian countries, so its examples were taken from European languages, such as French, English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Danish. The present work primarily uses examples from Japanese and English, and most Japanese examples are explained in detail to enable non-Japanese speakers to follow the explanations.

Though founded on theoretical research – in grammar, syntax, texts and text linguistics – as well as on the practical experience of both authors from years of teaching translation, the goal here is purely practical and applied. Basically, we aim to present a short introduction to the main problems of translation, *in casu*

between Japanese and English, and to provide descriptive tools for identifying such problems and to point to strategies for their solution.

We have therefore endeavoured to write a precise introduction and to keep the wording concise and to the point. This also explains the absence of theoretical argumentation and the relatively few references to others' work on translation and related matters. Apart from the absolutely necessary references, we have included a few books and Internet references on specific topics which have been mentioned in the text. It is beyond the scope of this book to attempt an exhaustive list of such translator's aids as well as of the many dictionaries and grammars in existence today.

Example sentences are grammatically correct, but not always what one would call "natural Japanese". This is inevitable, as they are constructed to make a certain point in connection with translations. This is not a Japanese textbook, and its example sentences should not be taken as models for either speech or writing in natural Japanese. Wherever possible, sentences are taken from real texts or conversations, but there are many occasions on which this has not seemed appropriate or possible without including very long stretches of text.

We owe thanks to a number of colleagues who have helped us by reading through the manuscript in its various phases. Thanks to Yoshiko Nakano and Kevin Shen, Steve Umebara, Peter Cave, and Ester Ho Hoa Yan for providing invaluable help with the Japanese examples. We are also deeply grateful to The Danish Research Council for the Humanities, E. Lerager Larsens Fond, The Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation, and The EAC Foundation for financially supporting our publication.

We would also like to thank our institutions, The University of Hong Kong for a grant to support the project, and both the University of Aarhus and Copenhagen Business School for granting us some time at the research retreat Klitgården. Finally we wish

to thank the staff and management of Klitgården for making our stay easy and enjoyable.

It is our hope that this book will be of interest not only for students and professionals of translation and language studies, but also for people generally interested in Asian languages, cultures and worlds of thought seen through the lens of translation from Japanese into English.

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*Klitgården, Skagen*

*July 2007*



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## *List of Grammatical Abbreviations*

ADV: adverb

AGENT: marks agent in passive sentences に *ni*

ASS: assertive marker, e.g. のです *no desu*, のだ *no da*

(appears at the end of sentences to underscore or assert the contents of the sentence)

ATTR: attributive marker, e.g. の *no* or という *toiu*

(placed between two NPs to show that the first modifies the second. *Toiu* can also be used to make a VP modify an NP)

CAUS: causal marker で *de*

(marks NPs as the cause of something)

COMP: comparison marker に *ni*

(follows NPs to mark them as the second part of a comparison, i.e. what something else is compared to)

CONC: concessive conjunction, e.g. が *ga*, けど *kedo*

CONJ: conjunction/conjunctional particle

COPULA: term used for the verb です *desu* (and inflected forms)

DIR: direction marker へ *he*

DR: discourse referent

FIN: interjectional final particle, e.g. わ *wa*, さ *sa*, ね *ne*

(end sentences to show various kinds of emphasis or emotion)

INCL: the inclusive postposition も *mo* or と *to*

INDIR OBJ: indirect object

LOC: locative marker, e.g. に *ni* or で *de*

(follows NPs that indicate place and time)

NOM: nominaliser, e.g. の *no*, こと *koto*

(follows VPs to turn them into NPs)

NP: noun phrase

OBJ: object marker を *wo* [o] or が *ga*

(follows NPs that are sentence objects)

PLUR: plural (suffix), e.g. たち *tachi*, ら *ra*

POSS: possessive marker の *no*

(appears between two NPs where the first owns the second)

PRED: predicate (verb phrase)

PREF: prefix

QUEST: question marker か *ka*

(sentence final particle showing that the preceding question is a sentence)

QUOT: quotation marker と *to*

(follows quoted thought or speech)

REL: relation

SUBJ: subject marker が *ga*

(marks NPs as subjects of the following VP)

TENT: the tentative form of verbs

TIT: title

TOP: topic marker は *ha* [wa]

(marks NPs as the topic of the sentence)

VP: verb phrase

# Introduction

In the bad old days, foreign languages were taught by making students painstakingly analyse and “translate” their way through texts of gradually increasing difficulty. With the invention of new and more efficient methods of language teaching that approach came to be somewhat derogatorily referred to as “the grammar-translation method”. At best, the grammar-translation method ensured that students eventually became able to read and understand a text in a foreign language. For dead languages like Latin, Classical Greek, or Classical Chinese this worked reasonably well, but for modern languages it had a number of practical disadvantages. The primary deficiency of the method was that few students ever became able to speak the language and to understand it in its spoken form. Another, perhaps less obvious, deficiency was that the students did not actually learn to translate either. The grammar-translation method aimed only at understanding the foreign language text, not at providing students with strategies, techniques, and knowledge that could have enabled some of them to become good translators. Instead, practical translators were self-taught, and their ability to translate well was seen as an innate talent that could not be taught. Our view is that translation *can* be taught, but at the same time we recognise that only a few of those taught may actually have the ability to become excellent translators of literary texts.

As global communication began to develop rapidly in the 20th century, more adequate methods were invented for language teaching – methods which focused on communicative competence rather than on detailed understanding. The grammar-translation method came to be seen as outmoded and was shunned completely in modern language classrooms. This often led to students going through years of language learning without ever having to build any kind of bridge between their mother

tongue and the foreign language they were learning. Some were exposed to contrastive analyses that pointed out interferences from their mother tongue in order to improve their competence in the foreign language, but only rarely were they asked to produce actual translations of whole texts.

Yet, alongside the new pedagogical language teaching, translation continued to exist as a profession and as an increasingly independent object of literary and/or linguistic research. And gradually translation has also come to be reintroduced in some foreign language curricula, albeit mostly as an elective subject; and it is taught in a very different form and with a purpose that is quite different from that of the old grammar-translation method, namely with the aim of introducing students to the knowledge and techniques needed to produce good translations and not just understandable ones.

It is a widespread misconception that the intensive research on computer translations during the past few decades will eventually solve all our translation problems and that the day will soon come when any foreign language text can be put into your computer and a flawless translation will come out a few nanoseconds later.

However, at the present time, computer translations are far from flawless, and even though translation programmes continue to improve, it is doubtful that computers will ever be able to obviate the need for a human translator except in cases of very concrete and simple texts of a technical nature.

To briefly illustrate why students of Japanese cannot rely on the computer translation programmes freely available on the Internet to do their homework for them, we entered a relatively uncomplicated Japanese sentence in one such early programme, Babelfish, and then asked for an English translation. The input sentence was:

昨日東京から帰ってきた田中さんは、今日京都へ行く予定です。  
*Kinoo Tookyoo kara kaette kita Tanaka-san ha, kyoo Kyooto he iku yotei desu.*

Yesterday Tokyo from returned Mr Tanaka TOP, today Kyoto-to go plan-is.

“Mr Tanaka, who came home from Tokyo yesterday, is scheduled to go to Kyoto today.”

However, Babelfish returned the following English translation:

“Tanaka who returns from yesterday Tokyo is the schedule which goes to present Kyoto.”

The Japanese sentence we entered had a modifying structure, which came out correctly in English as a relative clause. However, the time reference, *kinoo* (yesterday), which had been placed first in the Japanese sentence, was interpreted as a modifier of “Tokyo” – which, while grammatically possible, makes no sense semantically. The expression *yotei desu* was perceived by the computer as a copula phrase (noun + copula), which is again grammatically correct, but fails to recognise the idiom *yotei desu*, which means “is scheduled to”. For the word *kyoo*, which can mean “today” or (with a different reading of the characters) “the present time”, the computer made the wrong choice, probably because it again failed to recognise the connection between the time phrase and the verb. Finally, the tense of the modifying sentence is turned into the present despite the fact that the Japanese modifying verb is clearly marked as past tense.

In other words, the computer programme did not succeed in producing an adequate translation because it was unable to look at the finished product and ask itself, “Does this make sense?” Nor could the programme at any point during the process be said to really “understand” the text it was translating. The programme has an inventory of words (a dictionary) and a set of grammatical rules (a grammar) by which to order those words. While some may believe that this is all you need in order to create an adequate translation, the above example amply shows that when the crucial element of “understanding meaning” is missing, no adequate translation can be produced.

This textbook on translating Japanese texts is not intended to bring back the grammar-translation method in language teaching. Its aim is to aid teachers and students in the task of teaching

and learning how to create adequate translations, based on a full understanding of the source texts in Japanese and well thought-out renderings of such texts in English (or other languages). Unlike a computer programme, students can think, and they can understand meaning and context; they can therefore learn to create translations that are not only grammatically correct, but also meaningful, sensitive to context and genre, and enjoyable to read as texts in themselves.

The primary target group for our textbook are university students of Japanese, but it may well be used by high schools, adult education courses, self-taught students, teachers of Japanese, and possibly experienced translators who already know how to translate well, but do not know *why* they make the choices they do. Even translators who work with translations from foreign languages into Japanese may well find useful hints and strategies in this book. We have used only English as our target language, because of its worldwide utilisation, but the systematic descriptions of problems and strategies for translating from Japanese into English can be useful to students working with other languages as well.

### *The Japanese – English language pair*

All translation takes place between two languages. But not all languages are equal when it comes to translation. It is easier to translate from German into Dutch and *vice versa* than it is to translate between Japanese and English. This is because German and Dutch are closely related languages – they are both Indo-European, and they both belong to the subgroup of Indo-European languages called the Germanic languages. German and French are also both Indo-European languages, but while German belongs to the Germanic subgroup, French belongs to the Romance subgroup, thereby making translation a slightly harder challenge. English, too, belongs to the Germanic subgroup, but as it has been heavily influenced by Romance languages, translating between French and English presents other types of problems than translating between French and German. Still, within all the above-mentioned languages there are many

similarities – they are all written in the Latin alphabet and from left to right in horizontal lines following each other from the top of the page towards the bottom. They construct sentences in roughly similar ways with a subject and a verb combined with various other words or constituents. There are, however, also important differences among them in lexicon, syntax, word order and the way in which information is structured in a text.

When we translate between Japanese and English (or between Japanese and other Indo-European languages), the divide becomes considerably wider. The immediate visual difference is striking – Japanese uses a mixture of Chinese characters and syllabic signs, and it is sometimes written in vertical lines going from right to left. For English, you learn 26 letters and can immediately start spelling out and reading words, which are conveniently separated by spaces in written texts. When learning Japanese, you first learn two different syllabic systems, *hiragana* and *katakana*, each containing slightly less than fifty different signs. Then you begin to learn the approximately 2,000 Chinese characters (*kanji*) in daily use today. If you go on to read texts from before World War II, the number of *kanji* you need to learn becomes somewhat larger. On top of that, Japanese words are not separated by spaces but are written continuously without breaks. This makes it more difficult to delimit the words. Nevertheless, the writing is only a formal system to represent the spoken language, and although it is a barrier for students from non-*kanji* cultures, it is not directly related to the issue of translation.

The more important challenge is that Japanese is not an Indo-European language; it is considered by some to belong to the Altaic language family and by others to be a mixture of different language families. This means that there are huge differences between Japanese and English in lexicon, syntax, word order, the way information is structured, the idioms employed, the grammatical devices at your disposal, and the speech registers used in various social situations. Also, we should not overlook the contextual aspect which requires background knowledge of all those things we may, for now, vaguely group together as “culture”.

Japanese is characterised by the word order SOV (subject – object – verb), and by such features as placing even very long modifiers in front of the words they modify; it uses postpositions instead of prepositions; it offers little distinction between singular and plural; and it distinguishes speech levels within verb forms and other lexical items according to the status of the people involved in the communicative act, etc.

English is an SVO language, it prefers post-modification by relative sentences, uses prepositions and not postpositions, distinguishes singular from plural, and does not encode people's status overtly in verb forms and lexical items.

These very fundamental differences between the two languages involve radical challenges in the translation process, such as reorganising the whole message, redistributing semantic features across parts of speech and sentence elements, and compensating by other linguistic means for semes missing in, for example, morphemes. In the rest of this book, we shall explore the details of the process by which a Japanese text can successfully be transposed into a meaningful equivalent text in English.

Since there are such large differences between English and Japanese, this book will include contrastive descriptions of the two languages, even though this is not our main purpose. We intend to restrict ourselves to the less ambitious but nonetheless noble task of describing the principal problems a student will encounter when translating from Japanese to English, and of suggesting strategies for how to handle such problems.

### *Units of meaning, units of translation*

The point of departure for this book is the stance that the source text and the linguistic expressions at its surface constitute the necessary building blocks in first decoding the meaning to be transmitted, and next to decide which meaning to transmit and how to encode it.

Meaning is encoded all over, in and between, above and under linguistic expressions. In order to seize these different kinds of meaning components as they appear and contribute to the global

construction of meaning in the source text we shall proceed with what we term ***units of translation***. This concept has many uses. It is used, for instance, in a process-oriented sense as “the stretch of the source text on which the translator focuses in order to represent it as a whole in the target language” (Malmkær 1998, 286). Experiments have shown that experienced translators operate with larger stretches of text, such as phrases, clauses and sentences, than language learners who tend to focus on the single word. We shall use the term unit of translation in a linguistic and cognitive sense as referring to units that in different ways contribute to the global interpretation of the text and to the construction of its meaning.

We shall also use the concept of units as a structuring principle for this book. We believe, in fact, that it is advantageous for both practical and didactic reasons to proceed from the smallest units – such as minimal meaning components in morphemes and roots – to the greater ones, such as sentences, inter-sentence connections and inter-textual influences. This ***bottom-up*** procedure, that is, working our way up from minimal to maximal units of meaning and thus of translation, does not mean, however, that we adhere to a literary, “faithful” unit-by-unit translation style, be it word-by-word or clause-by-clause. On the contrary, we are quite aware that meaning units can, and most often have to, be reorganised in the target language, and even more so when dealing with language pairs such as Japanese and English. Meaning is simply not realised in the same parts of speech in these two languages, in much the same way as structuring and linking sentences in them, for example, convey different ways of presenting and ordering information.

Furthermore, constructing meaning when reading a text proceeds not only bottom-up, but also ***top-down***. Interpretation is, indeed, very much determined by global expectations as to what the text is about, to what genre it belongs, and to what is normally communicated in identical speech events. But interpretation is first and foremost guided by a general text interpretation principle of ***textual coherence***; a text must be ***coherent*** in order for a receiver to interpret it appropriately. Or, in other terms, a

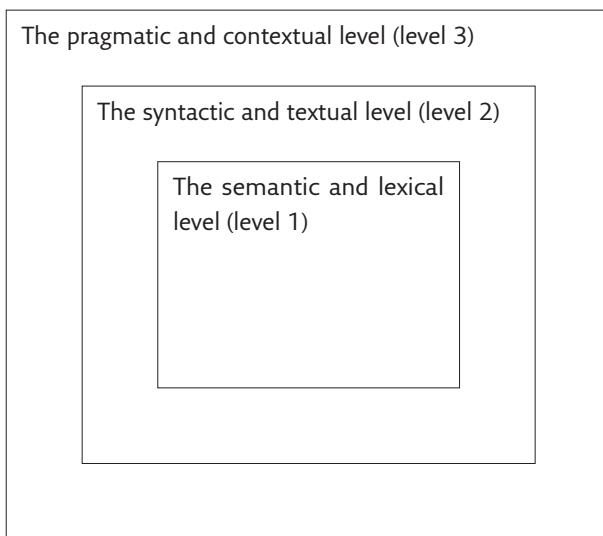
text receiver expects that a sequence of sentences must exhibit some kind of coherence for the sentences to create a text. This general principle of text coherence creates expectations as to what comes next in the text, which again activates another top-down process. A translator should be aware of such top-down effects when decoding a source text, and even more so when re-encoding it in the target language.

Thus interpretation of texts in general – be it for the purpose of merely reading them and getting access to the information contained in them, or for the purpose of translating them – proceeds both bottom-up and top-down; this up and down, back and forth way of understanding is called the ***hermeneutic circle***. But, again, for didactic reasons we think it most appropriate to begin with the smallest units and end with the largest – the text in its cultural context.

Following a functional line of reasoning, namely that language is there to be used in texts (spoken or written), which are determined by a specific context, we shall consider units of translation at different levels:

1. the ***semantic and lexical micro-level***, which includes mainly units such as semes and morphemes, lexemes and phrases, and different kinds of multi-word expressions
2. the ***syntactic and textual macro-level***, which suggests general principles for presenting information via units such as sentence structure, i.e. syntax and combination of sentences into texts in the two languages
3. the ***pragmatic and contextual mega-level***, where more overarching factors that influence translation are discussed; it comprises units such as function, genre and text type conventions, intertextuality and socio-cultural norms prevailing in the two languages and their speech communities

The embedding of these three levels is illustrated in Figure 1:



*Figure 1. Three levels of units of translation*

The philosophy behind this division of units of translation into three levels (Korzen & Lundquist 2004, 11) is that lexemes (from the first level) in different languages reveal fundamentally different principles for lexicalising, that is, for deciding, on the one hand, what meaning to put into words, and, on the other, how to distribute meaning on different parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. Lexemes even decide what goes into word stems and what gets expressed in morphemes. In lexicalising differently, people belonging to different speech communities probably organise their experiences differently and see the world through different looking glasses (Humboldt 2000 [1822]). Even so, it appears that people can express anything and everything in any and all languages. They just do it differently (Jakobson 1959). It is therefore of extreme importance for the translator, not least one who is translating between two languages that are as dissimilar as Japanese and English, to be aware of units of meaning, be they ever so small, and of how they are distributed and organised in both languages.

In fact, what may be expressed semantically or lexically in one language may be expressed via grammar or syntax, by the use of inflected forms, for instance, or by the arrangement of words within phrases, clauses and sentences, in another language. The syntactic arrangement yields meaning relations on its own. A simple example of this is how declarative sentences are turned into interrogative sentences in Japanese and English:

山田さんは明日来ます。	-	山田さんは明日来ますか。
<i>Yamada-san ha ashita kimasu</i>	-	<i>Yamada-san ha ashita kimasu ka</i>
Mr Yamada is coming tomorrow.	-	Is Mr Yamada coming tomorrow?

In the Japanese sentence, the syntactic arrangement is unchanged, and the question mode is created simply by adding the question marker *-ka* at the end of the sentence. In English the word order is inverted, and in speech the intonation changes. In writing, a question mark becomes obligatory.

Next, the level of creating meaning and organising information via syntax and linearisation of sentences come into the picture. As mentioned above, Japanese and English exhibit important differences in their way of presenting information within sentences and linking it across sentences. Thus Japanese makes extensive use of topic-constructions (TOP), which are not explicitly repeated by co-referents in the subsequent sentences. Even without a topic, the referent may well be excluded if the speaker deems the referent to be obvious from the context. This presents translators with problems like the following:

日本人は桜がとても好きです。毎年春になるとお花見に出かけます。

<i>Nihonjin</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>sakura</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>totemo suki desu.</i>
Japanese people	TOP	cherry blossoms	OBJ	very love
<i>Maitoshi</i>	<i>haru</i>	<i>ni naru to</i>	<i>ohanami</i>	<i>ni dekakemasu</i>

Every year spring become when cherry blossom viewing DIR go out

The first of the two sentences gives the reader a topic: Japanese people, identified by the topic marker *-ha*. Therefore the next sentence does not need a co-referent such as “we” or “they”,

since it is understood that the second sentence is also about “Japanese people”.

While English can have topic constructions, such as “as far as X is concerned”, these are far less frequent than in Japanese, and the co-referent is always explicitly stated in the text.

Another problem for translators of this small text is that they must know whether the sender is Japanese or not. If the sender is Japanese, the correct pronoun to use in sentence 2 would probably be “we” since the speaker would be part of “Japanese people”, but if the speaker is a non-Japanese, the correct pronoun will be “they”. So at least two translations are possible:

“(We/The) Japanese love cherry blossoms very much. Every year in spring (we/they) have picnics under the cherry blossom trees.”

This example of how difficult it can be for a translator of Japanese texts to detect the appropriate cohesive markers leads us to the third level, that is, the level of the socio-cultural context, which, with its language and culture specific norms and conventions for creating efficient texts, determines what is appropriate to say when, to whom and especially how. In Japanese, for instance, there are special markers of formality as well as several degrees of formality depending on the distance between the speaker and the listener. Such overt markers are not found in English, even though there are, of course, other ways for speakers of English to indicate formality, respect and humility. Japanese furthermore has quite distinctly different speech usage between men and women, not just on the formal level, but also in the contents of the conversation. Conceptual units at this level must have an impact on how the linguistic formulation in the target text should obey norms in the target culture. The two examples below show what type of problems this presents. In the first exchange, two female acquaintances of roughly equal status are talking together, and in the second, two men of equal status are talking. The contents of their exchange are the same. The first speaker comments on the second one’s watch, and the second speaker explains that her/his spouse bought it for him/her:

まあ、立派な腕時計ですね。

*Maa, rippa na udedokei desu ne.*

Oh, beautiful wristwatch is isn't it

これですか。主人が買ってくださったわ。

*Kore desu ka. Shujin ga katte kudasatta wa.*

This is QUEST My husband SUBJ buy gave (down) FIN

Taking into account that two women are speaking and that their language is slightly formal (*desu*), we might translate this first exchange as follows:

“My, what a beautiful wristwatch!”

“Oh, this? My husband bought it for me!”

If we look at the second example, we can see that it is quite different than the first:

いい時計だなあ

*Ii tokei da naa.*

Good watch is FIN

うん、家内が買ってくれたんだよ。

*Un, kanai ga katte kuretan da yo*

Yeah, wife SUBJ bought gave FIN

Knowing that two men are speaking here in an informal style characteristic of men of equal status in private conversations, we can translate the second exchange as follows:

“Hey, that's a nice watch!”

“Yeah, my wife got it for me.”

We can observe that the two women choose a more effusive style (*rippa na* versus *ii*, the more precise *udedokei* instead of simply

*tokei*), that their exclamatory words differ from those of the men, and that their sentences are longer. Length is one indicator of politeness. Another obvious difference is in the words used for “give”. The wife uses *kudasatta* about her husband’s gift – and this implies that the gift is given from one of higher status to one of lower status. The opposite is the case for the word *kureta* used by the husband. This status difference between spouses is also implicit in the words they use about each other. *Shujin* (husband) means “master”, while *kanai* (wife) means “inside the house”.

English also has gender differences in speech, but they are not quite as obvious and formalised as they are in Japanese. It is also difficult to transfer the different formality levels to English through linguistic devices only, so the status difference between people may have to be indicated by other means in the translated text. If this sounds daunting, we should mention that there are advantages to the status and formality markings as well, insofar as they give us a good indication of who is the speaker (or addressee) in sentences where the subject has been left out.

### *Strategies and choices*

Once units of translation and their roles have been identified in the source text, deliberations about how these units should be transposed into the target language in order to create a coherent target text are called for. As translation is not a one-to-one process, but a one-to-many process, the translator more often than not has a choice between several alternatives for every single unit, let alone for the combination of manifold units into a coherent text. Translation is thus a true problem solving activity. Not only do translators engage in risk-taking when choosing one among several alternatives; they also, by each choice that is made, put restrictions on what they can choose next.

By approaching translation as a problem solving activity, we shall stress the importance of being conscious of adopting well-pondered ***strategies of translation***.

In the same way in which we presented different levels for the units of translation, we shall consider how strategies of trans-

lation can be defined at different levels. First there is the level of ***global strategies***, which implies that the translators decide whether they prefer to stick closely to the source text, to respect its wording and ordering of elements, its stylistic effects, puns, etc. That is, they choose whether to be faithful to the source text or whether, on the contrary, to focus on the new target group and thus deviate from the source text in order to adapt it to the new situation – a so-called free, unfaithful or functional strategy.

Choosing a global strategy for the translation of an entire text, or different strategies for different parts, has a bearing on the ***local strategies***. A local strategy is obligatory for each linguistic choice made in the encoding of the target text; for example, what level of formality to choose between a set of alternative synonyms or syntactic constructions. What is also important is the interaction between the global strategies chosen and each local strategy determining a specific choice of linguistic item, since – for a text to be coherent – there must be semantic, syntactic and pragmatic consistency between the expressions chosen. Thus, the selection of a high formality expression, for example, can and should not be followed by a low formality expression (except, of course, if it is a conscious stylistic effect aimed at by the author of the source text).

In this introduction to translation, as it is perceived of and will be presented in this book, we have jumped back and forth between different stages in the translation process. We do, in fact, find it useful to distinguish three steps, as we have done before (Lundquist 2007), in translating a text. First there is the analysis of the source text, which is essential not only for simply understanding it in general, but also in order to identify units of translation, and determine how these contribute to the construction of the meaning of the text as a coherent whole. This first step of attaining a ***deeper understanding*** of the source text is essential in order to decide upon which global strategy to choose. Second, there is the step in which we undertake the process of ***transferring the source text***, bit-by-bit, unit-by-unit, into a target text in the target language, with all the awareness of the local strategies this involves. And thirdly, there is the step of re-

reading, and **revising**, the target text, taking into consideration whether this text will function as a whole for the new target group, and whether its coherence will meet their expectations. This final step involves a control and an adjustment of the consistency between global and local strategies.

### *Organisation of the book*

In the organisation of our book, we have combined the different structuring principles mentioned above, that is, units of translation at three levels, global and local strategies, and three steps in the interpretation process. In PART I we take as our point of departure the unit of the **text**, since this unit constitutes both the starting point and the end product of the translation process. We therefore consider it to be the central unit of translation. It is furthermore the starting point for the first step in the translation process, namely the step of **deep analysis** and **understanding** of the source text.

PART II concentrates on the second step in the translation process, which is that of **transferring individual units of translation**. The transfer of meaning involves a thorough contemplation of local strategies both when it comes to units at the micro-level of semantics and lexicon, and when it comes to units at the macro-level of syntax and textual coherence.

PART III includes the third and final step of **revising the target text**. Here it will be discussed how and why a strict control of especially the coherence of the end product text and of its contextual adequacy must be included in the translation process. The revision involves a thorough reconsideration of different pragmatic factors at the mega-level, and a fine-tuning of the global strategy together with the local strategies.



# PART I

THE SOURCE TEXT AND GLOBAL  
STRATEGIES FOR ITS TRANSLATION



## CHAPTER 1

# The source text as text

The first step in all translation is the translator's confrontation with the text that has to be translated, the ***source text***. In classroom situations, source texts may consist of excerpts of texts, but still they normally contain more than one sentence. In real-life situations, professional translators are practically always consigned to translate authentic texts in their entirety, be it short notices in trains, legal contracts, technical instructions, or entire literary works. Professional translators are commissioned with a specific task consisting in delivering a finished product, a ***target text***, which has to function in its own right and independently of the source text. In fact, the receivers of a translated text in the new and distanced communication context often do not concern themselves with whether the text is translated, or whether it is originally produced in their own language. Habitual receivers of a text are not aware of whether they are dealing with a translated text, that is, a ***secondary text***, or whether they are reading a ***primary text*** – at least not when the translation is a good one.

Since texts are thus both the input and the output of the translation process, we find it reasonable to define ***the text*** as the basic unit of translation. In this first chapter we shall briefly present some theoretical notions which are useful for the comprehension of how meaning is created in texts. In Chapter 2, we give a description of what should be examined and evaluated in the source text before translating it, illustrated by an analysis of a Japanese text. Chapter 3 presents different global strategies for deciding the overall plan for transposing the source text into its new context, together with a set of local strategies among which a translator must choose in each specific instance of transferring a unit of translation into the target language. Both types of strategies aim at (re)producing a coherent target text.

What a text is and how it comes about has been a topic for discussion in numerous text linguistic works (Halliday & Hasan 1976, Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, Lundquist 1980, 1990, 1999). It is commonly accepted that understanding a given source text is an indispensable precondition for translating it (Hatim & Mason 1990, Hatim 1997, Delisle 1980). In this book we do not aim to survey the theoretical studies on text and translation, nor shall we go into the discussion of the practical application of text analysis to translation (Hatim 1997). Instead, we will focus our attention on two perspectives which we perceive to be crucial for comprehending the relation between text and translation in general. The first is the concept of a text as a *coherent linguistic unit*; the second is the perception of a text as a *mental representation*.

## 1.1 Texts as coherent linguistic units

Different factors concur to create texts as linguistic units. The main factor is that a text – be it written or spoken – is the product of an intentional act on the part of the producer, intended as a communicative act directed towards the receiver. The unity of a text is signalled materially in the typographical layout in written texts and via the intonational contour in spoken texts, which are used to mark where a text begins and where it ends. The fact that a text is intended as one global communicative act – to inform about scientific findings in a scientific article, to state an agreement and bind two parties in a legal contract, to persuade voters to vote for you in an election pamphlet, etc. – entails that the text will also be marked by an internal coherence between its sentences, since every part of the text aims at the same purpose, that is, they are parts of the same plan.

Texts typically consist not of a single sentence (or of a sentence fragment), but of a *sequence of sentences* which must somehow be tied to one another; since the sender has chosen to let a given sentence be followed by another particular sentence, the receiver has the right to assume that the second sequence

must be relevant in some respect to the preceding one(s) (Grice 1975, Sperber & Wilson 1986). For why should a sender put a dissonant sentence into a sequence of otherwise harmonious sentences? It is indeed difficult to see the relevance between the sentences in example 5 below (p. 38) and therefore to convey coherence to the sequence and determine what its communicative function could possibly be.

The general principle of coherence is so compelling that readers go very far in order to search for a way of linking each sentence with the preceding (or following) one(s). An example is surrealistic prose, or, in Japanese, the *haiku* verse which to a non-Japanese may seem, if not incoherent, then at least demanding some extra effort to create a plausible coherence. Here is an example of a *haiku* poem by Kobayashi Issa:

1. 露の世は *Tsuyu no yo ha*  
露の世ながら *Tsuyu no yo nagara*  
さりながら *Sari nagara*

A literal translation would be:

“World of dew,  
While world of dew,  
While thus”

This verse is indeed very challenging to read for a non-Japanese reader who is not acquainted with the culture-specific rules for creating *haikus*, and for supplying the information that must be added in order to create coherence. The verse calls for a truly literary interpretation, which, however, also consists in conveying links between sentence(s) and/or fragments. The *haiku* text above contains the topicalised nominal phrase *tsuyu no yo ha*, “the world of dew”; a repetition of the same nominal phrase followed by the connector *-nagara*, which implies ellipsis of the copula, since conjunctional particles cannot follow noun

phrases directly (“while being a world of dew”); and finally the demonstrative pronoun *sari*, again followed by *-nagara*, which underscores that the demonstrative *sari* is originally a demonstrative, *sa*, followed by the existential verb *ari* (“while being so...”). These are related by no other links than the mere linearisation with its repetitions and with its 5-7-5 syllable structure, which is the defining characteristic of a *haiku*. There are no explicit verbs to relate the units, and there is no follow-up clause to provide meaning to the two concessive sentences ending in *-nagara*. Creating coherence in such a text demands a great deal of **inferencing**, that is, figuring out what the sender intended to say (see pp. 39-41).

According to the principles outlined above, a text must be given some kind of coherence for it to be understood, both when it comes to its overall, global function and when it comes to the local coherence between its adjacent sentences. The first type of coherence, which also, as shown in example 1 above, includes knowledge about cultural norms and conventions for creating texts, can be named **pragmatic coherence**; the second type qualified as **semantic coherence**. A text can thus be defined as follows:

A text is a **linguistic unit** which fulfils a **global communicative intention** and which consists of one or more sentences (or sentence fragments) linked together by **thematic, pragmatic, and semantic coherence**.

### 1.1.1 The unit of the text

Generally texts consist of more than one sentence, since the information to be communicated is too complex and extensive to be contained in one single sentence. This is exactly the reason why people produce texts. A single sentence can in principle contain an unlimited number of pieces of information, namely by the coordination or subordination of clauses, which is in principle indefinite (cf. the principle of recursivity, Chomsky 1965). In practice, however, there are limits to the length and

the number of intricate embeddings of information a reader can process from one sentence. This is why compound information consisting in several states-of-affairs is usually presented in subsequent sentences, the propositions of which each presents one state-of-affair.

One-sentence texts do exist, as in many signals and other textual short forms such as those in the following texts:

2. 止まれ *tomare* “Stop”

禁煙 *kin'en* “No smoking”

立ち入り禁止 *tachi'iri kinshi* “Off limits”

However, more often than not, texts occur as sequences of sentences (or sentence fragments). In fact, the short signal texts quoted above, which are quite common in English, are often replaced by longer, and more polite, texts in Japanese. For instance, while 禁煙 *kin'en* may be used in stations and other large public places, nice restaurants will often have more vague and polite signs:

3. おタバコはご遠慮ください *o-tabako ha go-enryo kudasai*

“Please refrain from smoking”

In translating contextually determined variations such as these, which reveal different registers for saying roughly the same thing, the translator should keep in mind the paradigm(s) of possible variations, because these determine the value of the expression chosen. Thus the sign *o-tabako ha go-enryo kudasai* with its **marked** politeness does not necessarily need to be translated into “please refrain from smoking” in English, where it does not habitually form a paradigm with the “no smoking” sign.

For a sequence of sentences to form a text and not merely a random sequence of non-related sentences, there must, as shown above, be **coherence** between the sentences. The difference between a non-coherent sequence and a coherent sequence is exactly what constitutes the principle of **textuality**. Textuality

is what makes a sequence of sentences a text. The concept of textuality designates, just as grammaticality does for the sentence, that a sequence of sentences is **well-formed**. These concepts are important to keep in mind when translating, in order to avoid changing, involuntarily, a coherent source text into a non-coherent target text, that is, to change what was a text in Language 1 into a **non-text** in Language 2.

The two brief sequences of sentences below exemplify, respectively, a text and a non-text:

4. みきちゃんは昨日幼稚園に行けなかった。風邪を引いて、微熱が出ていたので、おかあさんが一日休んだほうがいいと言いました。

*Miki-chan ha kinō yōchien ni ikenakatta. Kaze wo hiite, binetsu ga dete ita node, okaasan ga ichinichi yasunda hō ga ii to iimashita.*

“Miki could not go to kindergarten yesterday. She had caught a cold and had a slight fever, so her mum felt it would be best to take a day off.”

5. みきちゃんは昨日幼稚園に行けなかった。地球は丸いです。おかあさんが新しいハンドバッグを買いました。

*Miki-chan ha kinō yōchien ni ikenakatta. Chikyuu ha marui desu. Okaasan ga atarashii handobaggu wo kaimashita.*

“Miki could not go to kindergarten yesterday. The Earth is round. Their mother bought a new handbag.”

The sentences in example 4 are connected in such a way that they form a meaningful text. In example 5 it is difficult, in fact just about impossible, to guess what one sentence has to do with any of the others. This example, though extreme, shows how an unsuccessful translation may in the worst case end up, namely with presenting the reader with a riddle rather than a piece of plausible information. An illustration of an incoherent rendering of a source text is seen in the following:

6. 運転免許証をとるのに 30 万円以上もかかるとすると、今の経済状況では無理だ。

*Untenmenkyōshō wo toru no ni sanjuuman-en ijō mo kakaru to suru to, ima no keizaijōkyō de ha muri da.*

?\*<sup>1</sup> “To get a driver’s license, it costs even more than 300 thousand yen. The economic situation is unreasonable now.”

“In the present economic situation, it would be impossible to get a driver’s license if it costs more than 300 thousand yen.”

Examples 1 to 4 show that coherence between sentences is created in an interaction between the linguistic signals of the textual surface on the one hand – also called **cohesion** (Halliday & Hasan 1976) in text linguistic studies – and, on the other, the readers’ background knowledge concerning, for example, the subject treated in the text.

### 1.1.2 Inferences

Linguistic expressions are in themselves semantically under-determined; only their arrangement via syntax and the combination of sentences help restrict their meaning potential, and ultimately only context and background knowledge can yield the meaning intended by the sender. Though linguistic signals are important for establishing coherence, very often coherence is created between the lines, as **inferences**. Inferences can be seen as **bridges** that the reader builds between adjacent sentences, or rather between the information supplied in sentences, in order to (re)establish a plausible coherence.

Inferences come about as the result of a very general principle for human communication, by which the sender provides only the information that is necessary for the communication to succeed, and not more – and not less of course. This principle is called the general **maxim of quantity**: make your information as informative as required; do not make it more informative than required (Grice 1989, 26). What is required depends, of

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1 \* marks an argumentatively incoherent text.

course, on what the sender presupposed to be the background knowledge of the receiver: the more the receiver of a text knows beforehand, the less the sender has to put into the message, since the receiver can deduce the “missing elements” from what is said.

Background knowledge which is common to both sender and receiver stems from their participation in one and the same social context, involving, for example, knowledge about cultural norms, references to persons and events in the surrounding political sphere, etc. Inferences which are automatic in one context and one culture may thus not be so easily accessible in another. This is a fact that a translator should keep in mind when transferring a source text into a target text which is to be read and used by receivers endowed with other cultural horizons. Possible differences in background knowledge between the target groups of the source text and the target text respectively (cf. the *haiku* text in example 1) are probably what lead to a certain tendency observed in translated texts to be **more specific** and **more elaborate** than non-translated texts in the same language.

This tendency has been seen as a *universal of translation* (Laviosa-Braithwaite 1998) and termed the universal of *explication* (Klaudy 1998); what is implicit in the source text is (too) often made explicit in the target text. Thus, though translators intend to make it easier to read the target text by making explicit inferences which are implicit in the source text, they should at the same time consider whether the same inferences could be activated by the choice of other linguistic means in the target text, and/or whether the **loss** of inferences at one place in the text can be **compensated** for by relying on inferences at another place. This requires a thorough evaluation of which linguistic expressions to choose in the target language and how to organise them in order to *imply* information, rather than explicitate it. It is thus important to emphasise and remember when translating that even though inferences are not present and observable at the linguistic surface, they are **controlled** by the arrangement and succession of linguistic expressions.

Inferences are abundant in the *haiku* text in example 1, repeated here in its literal English translation, and these inferences can only be made by drawing on background knowledge:

1. “World of dew,  
While world of dew,  
While thus”

The background knowledge needed to infer the meaning of this *haiku* is that “the world of dew” is a Buddhist concept denoting the fleeting and impermanent nature of the world around us. For a devout Buddhist (like the author Kobayashi Issa), this fact would imply that true faith required detachment from all worldly things. However, when his beloved little daughter died, his detachment wavered, and in his grief he wrote:

“This world of dew,  
while being a world of dew,  
while being that...”

Or in a more explicit translation where the cultural meaning of “dew” is explained, and where the connectors in the original are changed into more explicit ones:

“This impermanent world  
is like a world of dew,  
I know, but how...  
how can I not grieve for my daughter”

## 1.2 Texts as mental representations

Reading and understanding a text not only involves coherence, global and local. It is also a question of creating an overall meaning of its content. A text should be formulated in a way that

makes it possible for the reader to construct a ***coherent mental representation*** of it as a whole, and this goes of course for any text, be it primary or secondary. This perspective on texts and their interpretation, which has been presented in various cognitive theories on ***mental models*** (Johnson-Laird 1983, Fauconnier 1994), is in our view extremely useful for seizing particularities about translating texts. We shall therefore expose the main concepts below.

Reading a text is a dynamic process in which the content decoded from a sentence is saved in a ***discourse memory***; reading the subsequent sentence means adding the content deduced to what is already present in the discourse memory. The content here is thus progressively ***updated*** with the new information stemming from subsequent sentences. Reading and comprehending a text is in this respect an ***incremental process***, which means that still more content is added to the discourse memory, where it forms a gradually more elaborate mental representation of the text.

As you read a text, you thus construct a mental representation of the content of each sentence, a mental representation which is updated with the reading or hearing of each new sentence. But what is in the mental representation? What you put in the mental representation consists firstly of ***discourse referents***, that is, the entities – persons, objects, phenomena – which the sentence “***is about***”. Discourse referents (DR) are set up by referring noun phrases. The sentence in example 7a contains two noun phrases, which are both entered into the discourse representation, as shown in the box below the example.

7a. 鈴木さんは自転車を持っています。

Suzuki-san                    ha    jitensha    wo    motte    imasu.

Mr/Mrs/Miss Suzuki TOP bicycle    OBJ has

“Mr (Mrs/Miss)                    Suzuki has a bicycle.”

Suzuki-san ha/Mr Suzuki = **DR 1**

Jitensha wo/bicycle = **DR 2**

Secondly you attribute characterisations to the discourse referent(s) by interpreting what the sentence “says about” it/them. Such characterisations are set first of all by verb phrases, the function of which is precisely to add **properties** to or state **relations** between discourse referents. In example 7a the relation to be set up in the discourse memory box is thus of the kind *have*:

Suzuki-san ha/Mr Suzuki = **DR 1**

Jitensha wo/a bicycle = **DR 2**

Motte imasu/has = **Relation REL 1**

**HAVE (DR1, DR2)**

By reading the next sentence, you get new information about the current discourse referent, which you add to the mental representation, or you create new discourse referents in the model, or you do both:

7b. 鈴木さんは自転車を持っています。安く買いました。

*Suzuki-san ha jitensha wo motte imasu. Yasuku kaimashita.*

Mr/Mrs/Miss Suzuki TOP bicycle OBJ has. Cheaply bought.

“Mr (Mrs/Miss) Suzuki has a bicycle. S/He bought it cheaply.”

Suzuki-san ha = ZERO = **DR 1**

Jitensha wo = ZERO = **DR 2**

Motte imasu = **REL 1**

Yasuku kaimashita = **REL 2**

The “ZERO” in the box above signals that the discourse referents from the preceding sentence are simply omitted in the Japanese text, that is, they are not repeated by means of pronominal anaphors, *he* and *it*, as in the representation box for the English sentence below:

Mr Suzuki = he = **DR 1**

A bicycle = it = **DR 2**

Has = **REL 1**

**HAVE (DR1, DR2)**

Bought cheaply = **REL 2**

**BUY (DR1, DR2)**

Within the text, the progression from sentence to sentence must bring some kind of new information to the mental representation. A sentence which brings no new information would be redundant. Thus the coherence between a given sentence and the following is assured by there being something *known* and there being something *new*. Often a sentence repeats something from the preceding one, for example by referring to a discourse referent which already exists in the mental representation, for instance by *co-referring*. In English co-referring is done by *co-*

**referential expressions**, such as the pronouns *he* and *it* above, which are used here to maintain “Mr Suzuki” and “a bicycle” in the mental representation. In Japanese texts, no such repetition of the discourse referents is normally employed.

Co-referential expressions constitute one of the most frequent coherence creating devices in English and other Indo-European languages, but in Japanese where a known discourse referent becomes the **default case**, there is often no need to repeat a reference to it in order to achieve coherence. Indeed, to do so would immediately identify the speaker or writer as a non-Japanese. Only new discourse referents are explicitly introduced.

When translating from Japanese into English, the problem of maintaining co-referential chains can be fairly intricate, since a translator will have to introduce a pronominal reference which is not found in the Japanese text. The polite title after a name, *-san*, gives no indication of whether the person is male or female, and several first names are also ambiguous as to gender. If a text introduces *Suzuki-san* the reader will have no idea whether it should be Mr, Mrs, Ms, or Miss Suzuki. There will be no pronominal co-referents to clarify this in the following sentences. Other factors will have to be taken into account, such as the activities carried out by the person, or - if dialogue is present in the text - the speech may indicate whether a man or a woman is talking. Let us look at an example and imagine that this is the opening sentence:

8a. 鈴木さんは夕食の用意をしていました。

*Suzuki-san ha yuushoku no yōi wo shite imashita*

“Suzuki-san (Mrs? Mr?) prepared supper.”

At this point, the likelihood is that *Suzuki-san* is “Mrs Suzuki”, since, in the vast majority of cases, meals are prepared by wives. If, however, the text continues as follows

8b. 庭で奥さんと子供が一緒に遊んでいた。

*Niwa de okusan to kodomo ga issho ni asondeita.*

“In the garden, his wife and child were playing together.”

we will realise that *Suzuki-san* in the first sentence must be “Mr Suzuki”. Here, the mystery is quickly solved, but in most cases it takes a quite close reading of the Japanese text before it is possible to pick the co-referential pronoun without which the English translation cannot function.

The example above may serve to illustrate how a mistaken translation may produce a text for which an incorrect or unintended mental representation is constructed. If the following sentence (8b) had not given away the gender of the person preparing the meal, a translator could have gone on for a long time under the assumption that *Suzuki-san* had to be a woman, simply because – in Japan especially – most often it is women who cook.

What the translator should be aware of is thus the differences in the ways that Japanese and English, respectively, express co-referential, and other, links. Only by choosing the right means can the translator assist the reader of the target text in arriving at a mental representation which is identical to the one aimed for in the source text.

Being aware of principles for how texts in general are constructed is important, but understanding what a particular text intends to convey is crucial for translating it. The next chapter presents a method for extracting meaning from a text – in a systematic way.

## CHAPTER 2

# Analysis and understanding of the source text

Chapter 1 explained the main principles for conceiving texts as coherent units, namely the principles of textual coherence and of mental representations. However, the reading of a text in real life – be it for the purpose of extracting information from it, or for the purpose of translating it – is more complicated. In fact, coherence turns out to be an intricate web of meanings – etymologically *text* means *texture*, i.e. *web* – and the mental representation of a text turns out to contain much more than discourse referents and relations.

In this chapter we shall attack real texts. In so doing, we pass from the conceptual, abstract level to the level of practical analysis of a text, or, more precisely, of analysing a source text with translation in view. We shall thus need a more elaborate array of tools in order to extricate the essential meaning components of a text. Below we present a checklist of questions which the translator should pay attention to when thoroughly studying the source text as the first step in the process of translating it. The list comprises questions which hint at different levels at which different types of coherence are created and all of which contribute to expanding our mental representation of the text.

A deep understanding of a source text must aim at answering at least the questions below, which are first described in 2.1, and then illustrated by an analysis of a Japanese text example in 2.2.

## 2.1 Questions to be addressed when analysing a source text

The questions to be addressed are presented below in an order which proceeds from ***thematic coherence*** based on the continuous reference throughout the text to a common theme or topic; to ***pragmatic coherence*** generated from the text being anchored in a specific context and having a specific function; and ending with ***semantic and syntactic coherence***, which is explicitly carried out by linguistic coherence devices (Lundquist 1980). This ordering does not mean that understanding proceeds gradually through these steps and in this specific direction. On the contrary, constructing meaning involves all levels simultaneously, and understanding is, as mentioned in the introduction, a process built on a constant alternation between top-down and bottom-up procedures. The order below is therefore intended only as a practical checklist.

### Checklist of questions

#### 1. *Topic*

What is the ***topic*** of the text? What is the text about? What is its subject? In Japanese the lead-in topic is often signalled by the topic marker *-ha* (TOP), while this is rarely the case in English, where other markings or syntactic arrangements are needed. The topic of a text usually involves several discourse referents, which are picked out via referring noun phrases from the start of the text and put into the discourse representation where they are updated as the text proceeds, bringing still more information. It should also be asked what the larger implications of this topic are, and how it links with a larger knowledge domain. This question may be answered by looking at the lexicon (vocabulary) involved in the composition of the text. Topic – what the text is about – is also called the ***theme*** of the text, and consequently the development of the theme through the text is called ***thematic coherence*** (Lundquist 1980 and Lundquist 1990) or ***thematic progression*** (Danes 1974). Thematic coherence is based on links

from noun phrases back to preceding ones, in what was called co-referential chains in Chapter 1, but also comprises semantic contiguity between lexical items, the so-called *semantic isotopies*, as for instance in the following piece of text:

1. この画家は、生前すばらしい作品を数多く残しています。この美術館では、彼の遺作のうち十点が、一般に公開されています。

*Kono gaka ha, seizen subarashii sakuhin wo kazuooku nokoshitei-masu.*

This painter TOP before his death wonderful works OBJ numerous left behind

*Kono bijutsukan de ha, kare no isaku no uchi jutten ga,*

This museum LOC TOP he POSS works left after one's death ATTR among ten SUBJ

*ippan ni kōkai sarete imasu.*

generally exhibited to the public are being.

This painter left many wonderful works behind. In the art museum, ten of his paintings are put on display.

The underlined words all refer to art in one way or another and thereby they constitute semantic isotopies.

## 2. *Contextual anchoring*

How is the text **anchored** in the original communicative situation? Are there any direct references to the source environment of the text, for instance in the form of **deixis**, such as

2. われわれは “we”
3. この国では “in this country”
4. この歴史的な日には “on this historic day”
5. 大統領は “the President”

Do such references have to be maintained, rephrased, explained, or dropped? This is the first factor in determining the **pragmatic coherence** of the source text, and in deciding what implications

are connected with transforming the text into its new anchoring, that is, into its new translated context.

### 3. *Sender's attitude*

What is the sender's **attitude**? Is s/he for or against, positive or negative, serious or ironic, formal, informal, neutral, colloquial? The sender's attitude can be deduced from evaluative expression, such as

6. 幸い *saiwai*  
"luckily"
7. …に抵抗を感じます *...ni teikō wo kanjimasu*  
"[I] don't feel comfortable with..."
8. …と悲しく思われます *...to kanashiku omowaremasu*  
"[we] can't help feeling sad about..."

It goes without saying that maintaining the correct attitude from the source text throughout the target text is indispensable for creating a successful translation.

### 4. *Argumentative direction*

What is the **argumentative direction** of the text? In which argumentative direction does the sender lead us? What is the conclusion that the sender wants us to draw? Are there any linguistic "markers" that show us the argumentative orientation of the text, such as

9. 80% 以上 *hachijuu paasento ijō*  
"More than 80%"
10. 半分までもいかない *hanbun made mo ikanai*  
"not even half"
11. まだまだそこまでは届きついていない *madamada sokomade ha todokitsuite inai*  
"[we] are still very far from reaching that [goal]"

Again, the argumentative direction of the target text – is it for or against? – should be strictly respected, though perhaps through other linguistic means when rendering the source text into the target text.

### 5. *Sender's intention*

What is sender's **intention**? Is it the sender's intention to inform, to describe, to tell, to explain, to instruct, to convince, etc.? This can be conceived of as the overarching **speech act** of the text. Translating a text may involve a change of speech act; the persuasive speech act of a political programme, for example, may be rendered as an informative speech act in the target text if the function is mainly to inform the new readers about what is going on in the political sphere of the source country.

### 6. *Function*

What is the **function** of the text – for what purpose was it constructed? Is the dominating function to express the sender's feelings (focus on 1<sup>st</sup> person), to influence the receiver (focus on 2<sup>nd</sup> person), or to inform about a (set of) state(s)-of-affairs (focus on 3<sup>rd</sup> persons)? This distinction between three functions that characterise human communication (Bühler 1934) has been used to categorise texts into three general **text types** (Reiss 1976): expressive texts, operative texts, and informative texts. This division is useful when deciding upon a global strategy for one's translation (see Chapter 3).

### 7. *Text genre*

Does the text belong to a recognisable **genre**? A genre “refers to the linguistic expressions conventionally associated with certain forms of writing” (Hatim 1998, 68), such as editorial, contract, instruction, advertising, preface, novel, poem, etc. Genre conventions may vary considerably from one culture to another, and definitely do so in the case of Japanese and English. This pragmatic fact must be kept in mind when transferring a Japanese text into English.

Questions 2 to 7 all concern the pragmatic coherence of the text, since they deal with factors inherent in the situation of communication: the anchoring of the sender's text in a specific context, with a specific intention aimed at a specific target group. The next question will deal with what is going on at the surface of the text, as far as explicit coherence between sentences is concerned.

### 8. *Explicit coherence between sentences*

How is **coherence** established between sentences? How, for instance, are **co-referential relations** obtained in the source text? Are the sentences linked by **rhetorical relations** (Mann & Thompson 1988), i.e. temporal, logical or other relations? Rhetorical relations may be explicitly signalled by so-called **connectors**, such as

12. だから *dakara* “because [of that]”
13. そのために *sono tame ni* “consequently”
14. あれから *arekara* “after that”

Rhetorical relations may also be activated by the mere linear succession of two sentences which induce the reader to make elaborative **inferences** that will bridge adjacent sentences. Coherence is also created by semantic overlap between lexical expressions, the so-called **semantic isotopy**. Finally it should be noticed that coherence could also appear as **change in coherence**. Such changes can be indicated by the use of so-called **mental space builders** (Fauconnier 1994), which mark the transition to a new **mental space** in the text. Temporal expressions such as

15. 1 9 4 1年には *senkyuuhakuyonjuuichi-nen ni ha* “In 1941”
16. 2 0 0 3年には *nisensan-nen ni ha* “In the year 2003”

“build” a new mental space in which the state-of-affairs described shall be seen and evaluated. So do epistemic expressions such as

17. 夢には *yume ni ha* “In [my] dreams”
18. 彼の希望は *kare no kibō ha* “His wish is”
19. 原則では *gensoku de ha* “In principle”
20. 実際には *jissai ni ha* “In reality”
21. 天気予報によると *tenkiyohō ni yoru to* “According to the weather forecast”

The awareness of such expressions is crucial in order to decide the where, when and who behind the state(s)-of-affairs referred to in the text.

Using this checklist – with its various text linguistic tools for text analysis – makes it not only possible but also necessary to expand and enrich the mental representation of the analysed text considerably. In fact, the mental representation will contain not only the number of discourse referents with the relations between them, but also attitude, intention, argumentative direction, subordinate mental spaces and so forth. At this point in time, no text linguistic theory has come up with an adequate unified description of the interaction of all these levels. But still, the concepts and questions are useful in practice for revealing how meaning is constructed in the source text, and for deciding how this meaning, in all its many facets, should be rendered in the target text. This will be treated in the next section.

## 2.2 Analysing a Japanese source text

Below follows an analysis of a Japanese newspaper text and its official translation into an English newspaper article:

22a. ■《天声人語》July 23, 2003 (Asahi shinbun)  
懐かしい場面が次々と思い出される。日本のお家芸といわれた水泳の平泳ぎである。力で多少劣っても技術で上回ることができる。そんな特色のせいか、新しい泳法が浮かんでは消えた種目で、たびたび日本選手が新泳法で話題にもなった。  
「まだ浮かんでこない。まだだ」。そんな実況放送を思い出すのはメルボルン五輪（56年）だ。飛び込んだ後、しばらく選手たちの姿が見えない。あのとき

の金メダリスト古川勝選手は40メートル以上も潜水した。抵抗を少なくするための泳法だったが「危険だ」などの理由で、その後禁止された。

ミュンヘン五輪(72年)では田口信教選手のキックが注目された。前回のメキシコ五輪では、バタフライのキックだとされ失格になっていた。その疑惑をはねかえして優勝した田口選手は、独特のキックを「足の短い日本人向きに考案したキック」と語っていた。

21日、世界水泳で優勝した北島康介選手は100メートル平泳ぎでは田口選手以来の日本人による世界新記録である。折り返してからのスピードには目を見張った。背景には、泳法のコンピューター解析など最新の研究成果があるらしい。それを生かすことができたのはもちろん、北島選手の優れた能力だ。古川選手は子どものころ和歌山県の紀の川で泳ぎ、成長した。田口選手は愛媛県の養魚池でコイを追いかながら平泳ぎを覚えたという。時代の違いを感じる。北島選手には、ハイテク時代に微差を競う別のつらさがあるかもしれない。

平泳ぎの歴史に、忘れられない場面をもう一つ加えた20歳だった。

## 22b. Kitajima blazes a trail that others must follow

Champion swimmer Kosuke Kitajima's record-breaking performance in Barcelona brought back a host of memories. Kitajima is the latest in a line of fine breaststroke swimmers out of Japan.

His specialty is a discipline that allows technique to make up for a shortfall in physical power. Perhaps because of this, breaststroke is a discipline in which new swimming methods appear and disappear one after another. Japanese swimmers are often spotlighted because of these new methods.

What comes to mind is a live broadcast from the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. "The swimmers are still underwater. None has surfaced yet," the announcer said. On the television screen, the breaststroke swimmers disappeared from sight after leaping into the water. Masaru Furukawa, who won the gold medal for the event, swam more than 40 meters underwater. The submersion method was designed to minimise the resistance of water. Later, it was banned on grounds that it was "dangerous."

During the 1972 Munich Olympics, attention focused on Nobutaka Taguchi's style of aggressive kicks for propulsion. He had stuck to the method despite having been disqualified as a competitor using kicks for butterfly in the previous Olympics Games in Mexico.

Taguchi was vindicated by winning the 100-meter breaststroke title. Referring to his peculiar way of kicking, he said, "This was devised to suit Japanese swimmers with relatively short legs."

With his win on Monday at the World Swimming Championships in Barcelona, Kitajima became the first Japanese since Taguchi to shatter the world record for the 100-meter breaststroke. He put on an amazing speed in the second half of the race.

Much of Kitajima's feat seems attributable to the findings of cutting-edge research on swimming methods, such as analytical studies using computers. The swimmer is, of course, to be credited with superb abilities for putting the findings into practice.

Furukawa and Taguchi were far less blessed when it comes to the training environment. As a child, Furukawa swam in the Kinokawa river in Wakayama Prefecture, and Taguchi learned to swim breaststroke as he chased carp at fish farms in Ehime Prefecture.

The age of high-tech had not arrived to help them. On the other hand, it may be said that Kitajima faces harder competition in a sense because minute differences determine the outcome of races now.

Anyway, the 20-year-old added one more unforgettable scene to the annals of breaststroke swimming.

(*Vox Populi, Vox Dei*,

*Asahi Evening News and International Herald Tribune*, July 24, 2003)

If we are to apply the above questions to the Japanese text (leaving aside the problem of whether the translated English text adequately corresponds to the Japanese source text on all these parameters), we first need to reply to the question about **topic** and how this links with a larger knowledge domain.

### *Topic*

The topic is introduced gradually in the first paragraph of the text. The second sentence, *Nihon no o-iegei to iwareta suiei no hiraoyogi de aru*, tells us that the text is about breaststroke and that Japanese swimmers are particularly strong in this discipline. The third and fourth sentences tell us that this is a question of technique rather than strength, and that new methods of swimming often put the focus on Japanese swimmers. No mental space builder has been introduced at this point, so the Japanese text provides no clue to why the author is talking about *natsukashii bamen*, “nostalgic scenes”, in the very first sentence.

As we can see, the translator of this text has chosen to clarify the topic from the very first paragraph of his translation in order to compensate for the fact that English readers may not be aware

of the fact that a Japanese swimmer has set a new world record in the World Championships in Barcelona. He writes:

22c. Champion swimmer Kosuke Kitajima's record-breaking performance in Barcelona brought back a host of memories. Kitajima is the latest in a line of fine breaststroke swimmers out of Japan.

Through these two sentences he manages to give us two important pieces of information about what to expect from the rest of the text, namely **how** the specific Japanese swimmer has broken the record recently, and **who else** were in line, since this swimmer is “the latest in a line” of great Japanese swimmers.

When we look at the lexicon to determine the wider implications of the topic of *Nihon no o-iegei*, “Japanese specialty”, and *hiraoyogi*, “breaststroke”, we find many lexical items in the following paragraphs to add to and reinforce the already mentioned wider implications: *Nihon senshuu*, “Japanese contestants”, *Meruborungorin* and *Myunhengorin*, “the Olympics in Melbourne and Munich”, *kinmedarisuto* “gold medalist”, *yuushuu shita*, “won”, *sekai suiei*, “world swimming”, *sekai shinkiroku*, “new world record”, *hyaku meetoru*, “100 meter”, *shineihō*, “new swimming method(s)”, *eiō no konpyuutaa kaiseki nado saishin no kenkyuu seika*, “the newest research results from computer analysis of swimming methods”, *gijutsu*, “technique”. Throughout the text, three names keep cropping up, namely Furukawa Masaru, Taguchi Nobutaka and Kitajima Kōsuke. However, even if we do not know that these names represent three generations of famous Japanese breaststroke swimmers, the other lexical items mentioned above should easily point us in the direction of *swimming*, particularly *breaststroke*, *Japan*, high level *competitions* (world record, Olympics, gold medalist), and the question of *new techniques*.

The topic can therefore be determined to be a breaststroke-swimming contest in which a Japanese swimmer set a new world record by using new techniques. The wider knowledge area is swimming as a competitive sport, sports in general, and Japanese swimmers.

### *Contextual Anchoring*

When we go on to look at how the text is **anchored** by looking for references to the source environment, we find *natsukashii bamen*, “nostalgic scenes”, and we later realise that these have to do with earlier Olympic Games. The vocabulary also helps to anchor the text to Japanese swimming and breaststroke in a competitive international context by containing expressions such as *Nihon no o-iergei*; *Nihon senshū*; *ashi no mijikai Nihonjin-muki ni*, “intended for the short-legged Japanese”; *sekai suiei*, “world swimming”; *Wakayama (no Kinokawa)* and *Ehime-ken*, two prefectures in Japan; and *hiraoyogi no rekishi ni*, “in the history of breaststroke”. If we can recognise and correctly identify these vocabulary items, we will have found out that the source environment is Japan and the history of breaststroke swimming in Japan. The event that has prompted this column is less clear from the text, but there are clues: the 21st may be thought to refer to July 21, 2003, since the column was printed on July 23, 2003. The “world swimming” might be some kind of world championships, so all that remains for a diligent translator who is not up to date on the latest sports news is to find out from the Internet or from newspapers exactly what kind of competition took place on July 21. A brief search will soon reveal that the event was the 10th FINA World Championships in Barcelona. By researching this background, we can also learn that the 100-meter breaststroke was indeed won by a Japanese swimmer, Kitajima Kōsuke – the 20-year-old mentioned at the end of the two texts. It takes a bit more effort to connect the two place names with the two other swimmers mentioned in the text and to gain an overview over the history of breaststroke in Japan, but again this is possible to do by searching Japanese Internet sites.

### *Sender's attitude*

The third question concerns the **sender's attitude**, and to determine this, we need to look for evaluative expressions. There are a number of these in the present text, and most of them tend toward pride and admiration in connection with the achievements of Japanese swimmers: *natsukashii*, “nostalgic for something good

in the past”, *o-iegei*, “a traditional strength”, a “home-grown specialist art”, *chikara de tashō otottemo gijutsu de uwamawaru koto ga dekiru*, “inferior physical strength can be overcome by superior technique”, and *tabitabi nihonsenshu ga shineihō de wadai ni mo natta*, “Japanese swimmers have often been in focus because of new swimming methods”, are all strongly indicative of a positive attitude towards the (Japanese) national top swimmers. *Giwaku wo hanekaeshite*, “was vindicated”, strongly suggests that Taguchi was unfairly disqualified in the Mexico Olympic Games. *Nihonjin ni yoru sekai shinkiroku*, “a new world record by a Japanese”, can be said to underline the pride felt by the writer at the achievement of a Japanese swimmer. *Me wo mihatta*, “was amazed”, again expresses admiration. *Mochiron, Kitajima no sugureta nōryoku da*, “is, of course [due to] Kitajima’s superior skills”, is also praise, and *wasurerarenai*, “unforgettable”, helps to reinforce the laudatory tone. On this basis, we can safely say that the author’s attitude is a positive one, even though the expression “inferior strength” has a somewhat negative nuance.

#### *Argumentative direction*

The fourth question concerns the **argumentative direction**. This is closely connected to the above question of attitude, and we may suggest that the argumentative direction of the text at hand is to convince the reader of the superior technique and skills of Japanese swimmers. Evaluative expressions such as *yonjūu meetoru ijō*, “more than 40 meters”, and *sugureta gijutsu*, “superior technique”, are two examples of the sender’s way of expressing admiration, respect, and a certain pride in his country’s swimmers.

#### *Sender’s intention*

Another related question deals with the **sender’s intention** and the overarching speech act. The information contained in the text is not new – much of it would have been found in the sports pages of the newspapers the day before. Putting the achievements of Kitajima in a historical context by comparing him to his predecessors in world-class breaststroke swimming is, however,

new. In this sense, there is some informative content in the text. The overarching intention, however, is not to inform but to extol the achievements of Japan in the field of breaststroke and to convince the reader of – or confirm him/her in – this view.

### *Function*

The following question addresses the **function** of the text. To answer this, we need to look at the overall placement of this particular daily column in the newspaper as a whole. The column *Tensei Jingo* can deal with almost any topic that is current in the news and add a viewpoint that generally incorporates an opinion, although rarely a strongly formulated one. For the column overall, it can be said that the intention is to entertain the readers and perhaps make them think a little as well. In the case of the present text, it serves to reinforce Japanese pride in some of the great achievers among their countrymen by informing them of the historical context of the latest national victory. The text is intended for fellow-Japanese readers, and this may have prompted the rather different function of the English translation, which seems more intended to teach a moral lesson (“blazes a trail for others to follow”). The dominant function in the source text would appear to be to express the sender’s feelings (focus on 1<sup>st</sup> person), as may be seen from the introductory sentence: *natsukashii bamen ga tsugitsugi to omoidasareru*, “One can’t help recalling many other nostalgic scenes”. In the English translation, however, the emphasis is on informing (focus on 3<sup>rd</sup> person), as can be seen from the introductory phrase: “Champion swimmer Kōsuke Kitajima’s record-breaking performance in Barcelona”. This phrase actually provides information that is not even found in the Japanese text, such as the venue of the event, Barcelona. It thereby puts additional discourse referents into the mental representation, compared to the Japanese text.

### *Genre*

The next question is about **genre**, and it is easily answered in the case of this text. The column *Tensei Jingo* is a sub-genre in itself under the larger text genre newspaper columns, which covers

mostly brief and relatively easy-to-read essays. Their target group of readers is diverse and covers almost all of the newspaper's readers, regardless of background or interests.

### *Explicit coherence between sentences*

The final question addresses ***explicit coherence*** between sentences. Coherence can be marked by conjunctions and conjunctival particles, co-referential expressions and semantic isotopies. The present text tends to rely heavily on short declarative sentences, which is possibly a characteristic of texts dealing with sports events. Nevertheless, there are several ***conjunctival particles*** in use: such as *-temo* (even though), *-no sei ka* (perhaps because of), *-de/-te* (and), *-ga* (but), *-ato* (after), *-te kara* (and then), and *-nagara* (while). Only a few of these are rendered with their literal meaning in the target text, since in most cases the information has been ordered in different ways, which require different conjunctions. Occasionally one sentence in the source text has become two sentences in the target text or two sentences in the source text have been rendered as one in the target text. The example below illustrates that this may lead to a somewhat different meaning:

22d. 力で多少劣っても技術で上回ることができる。そんな特色のせいか、新しい泳法が浮かんでは消えた種目で、たびたび日本選手が新泳法で話題にもなった。

"His specialty is a discipline that allows technique to make up for a shortfall in physical power. Perhaps because of this, breaststroke is a discipline in which new swimming methods appear and disappear one after another. Japanese swimmers are often spotlighted because of these new methods."

The first sentence in the Japanese sentence simply says that "superior technique can make up for inferior strength". In English, this is presented as specific for Kitajima's technique, thereby making a connection that is not obvious in the Japanese text. After this, the English text has two sentences, whereas the Japanese text has only one. If we look closely at the Japanese text, it should be analysed as follows:

22d(1) そんな特色のせいか、

*Sonna tokushoku no sei ka,*

Such special feature ATTR reason QUEST

“Perhaps because of such a special feature (=technique making up for lack of strength),

22d(2) 新しい泳法が浮かんでは消えた種目で、

*atarashii eihō ga ukande ha kietu shuumoku de,*

new swimming methods SUBJ come and go discipline being

and being a discipline where new swimming methods come and go,

22d(3) たびたび日本選手が新泳法で話題にもなった。

*tabitabi nihonsenshu ga sueihi de wadai ni natta.*

Often Japanese swimmers SUBJ swimming method CAUS topic became

“Japanese swimmers often came into focus because of new swimming methods.”

By interpreting the middle phrase in the Japanese sentence as a final phrase, the causal relationship becomes fixed as follows:

22e(1) Technique makes up for lack of strength, THEREFORE breaststroke is a discipline where new methods come and go (and Japanese swimmers are in focus)

Whereas when the sentence is taken as one, the causal relationship can be interpreted in the following way:

22e(2) Technique makes up for lack of strength, THEREFORE Japanese swimmers are often in focus for their new swimming methods (breaststroke being a discipline where new methods come and go)

It is often a good solution for a translator to disregard the full stop punctuation in order to create a more natural flow in the target language, but it requires great attention to the relationship and coherence between sentences.

As shown above, **co-referential expressions** are not as frequent in Japanese as they are in English, but we may find a few in this text: *sonna tokushoku*, “this characteristic”, is co-

referential with *chikara de tashō otottemo gijutsu de uwamawaru koto ga dekiru*, “inferior physical strength can be overcome by superior technique”; *sonna jikkyō hōsō*, “this live transmission”, is co-referential with *Mada ukande konai. Mada da*, “They are still under water!”; *ano toki*, “then”, and later *sono ato*, “after that”, both refer to the Melbourne Olympics; *sono giwaku* refers to the disqualification of Taguchi for using a “butterfly” style kick; *sore (wo ikasu)*, “[make practical use of] that”, refers to the newest results of computer analysis of swimming methods; and finally, *nijussai*, “twenty-year-old”, refers back to Kitajima in the preceding sentence.

**Semantic isotopies** (semantically related words) are, for instance, *natsukashii bamen*, “nostalgic scenes”, *jidai no chigai*, “the changes over time (the period being different)”, *rekishi*, “history”, and *wasurerarenai bamen*, “an unforgettable scene”, which all refer to history and change. *O-iegei*, “traditional national strength”, *gijutsu*, “technique”, and *shineihō*, “new swimming methods”, are similarly related as they all refer to the technical side of swimming.

The text is furthermore held together by **mental space builders**, such as the various major sports events referred to: the Melbourne Olympics in 1956, the Munich Olympics in 1972, *zenkai no Mekishiko Gorin*, “the previous Mexico Olympics” (1968), and *sekai suiei*, the 10th FINA World Championships in Barcelona.

The above text example shows how the English translation deviates from the Japanese original in several interesting ways. First of all, the English version has been given a title, “Kitajima blazes a trail that others must follow”, and thereby it has already introduced a topic before the text has even started. It is a characteristic of this particular column that while the Japanese texts never have titles, the English translations always have them. This can be interpreted as a stylistic requirement in English, or it may simply be designed to remove some of the ambiguity that often characterises the first few lines of the Japanese text.

Secondly, the ordering of the information in the two texts is radically different, and the English translation contains more

information and more explicit connections than the Japanese text does. Subjects that are missing in the Japanese text (because they are obvious from the context) are sometimes supplied in English, not just with a pronominal anaphor, but with a full noun phrase, as for instance in *mada ukande konai*, “they have not come up yet”, which is rendered in the official translation as “the swimmers are still under water”.

A thorough study and deep understanding, in the vein of the analysis presented above, of the text to be translated is a prerequisite for the translation proper. It serves to determine the strategy to be adopted when transferring the text as a whole, and when making a specific linguistic choice for each unit of translation. General strategies - global for the target text to function as a whole in its new context and local for each instance of translation - will be dealt with in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 3

# Strategies for transferring the source text

In Chapter 2 we saw that the first and obligatory step in the translation process consists in the analysis and deep understanding of the source text. The second step consists in the actual transfer of meaning from the source language into the target language, and the deliberate use of target language means to create a coherent target text.

Every time you produce a linguistic message from scratch, you have the choice between a practically unlimited reservoir of words and constructions. When you translate, your choice is limited by what has already been “chosen for you” by the sender of the source text. The source text (i.e. the primary text) puts restrictions on the means you can choose for encoding the target text (i.e. the secondary text). However, translators still have an array of possible words and expressions at their disposal when transferring the successive sentences of a source text into a target text. This choice among several alternatives is what makes translation a ***problem solving activity***, what again implies that the translator – as the problem solver – must have a ***plan*** for how to arrive at the ***goal*** and with which ***means***. Translators must use ***strategies*** in order to obtain the wished-for result; for instance, they must have guidelines for the considerations to make when choosing one way rather than another of putting a unit of translation into a target language expression. In this chapter we shall present two types of strategies, the first being the ***global strategies***, the second the ***local strategies***.

### 3.1 Global strategies

Let us look once more at the definition of a text as presented in Chapter 1:

A text is a linguistic unit with a global communicative intention which consists of one or more sentences linked together by thematic, semantic, and pragmatic coherence.

This definition means that the text should obviously also in its translated form come out as a **coherent whole** with an easily **recognisable function**. A translated text must function in its own right in the new context, and the receivers of the target text must be put under the same conditions of interpretation as the source text receivers. This means that for them the reading of the target text with an ensuing construction of a coherent mental representation should be as effortless (or as difficult!) as was the case for the first intended receivers of the source text. This puts a heavy load on translators' shoulders, in that they have to deliberate whether they want to be true to the letter of the original sender, or whether they prefer to adapt the target text to its new readers.

This basic choice between a source text-oriented translation as opposed to a target reader-oriented translation has been dealt with in translation studies in the following well-known dichotomies (Lundquist 2007, 36):

literal translation	vs	free translation
linguistic translation	vs	communicative/functional translation
faithful translation	vs	unfaithful translation

**Literal** translation covers in its most extreme form the word-for-word translation, and in a less radical form the unit-for-unit translation, where one word or (syntactic, semantic) unit in one language should correspond to one word or unit in the other. Translation never proceeds like this, and between a pair of lan-

guages as typologically and structurally dissimilar as Japanese and English such a strategy is obviously not even conceivable. **Free** translation is a relative term, which can stretch from complete rewriting by using innovative and creative renderings of the source text, with almost no signs left of it whatsoever, to translations which deviate from the source text to a certain degree only.

**Linguistic** translation is comparable to literal translation, even though not as extreme. It aims essentially at respecting the linguistic wording and structuring of the source text, as far as possible, whereas a **communicative** or **functional** translation strategy focuses more on the adaptation of the source text to the **communicative needs** of the new target group, taking into account the **function** of the target text in the new situation.

The same opposition is found in the notions of **faithful** as contrasted to **unfaithful** translation strategies, which of course mean (un)faithful to the original producer's linguistic and stylistic choices and personal style; but which might also be interpreted as being (un)faithful to the new target readers and their expectations as to what norms – linguistic, stylistic, cultural, etc. – a text should obey in a given context. The terms usually denote the (in)fidelity to the source text.

As a general rule, strategies that are faithful to the source, that is, strategies on the left side of the dichotomies above, are preferred when literary, scientific, or political authorities have written the texts, especially when these are characterised by a certain stylistic form which is important for the message. As examples can be mentioned works by Murasaki Shikibu, Matsuo Bashō, or Fukusawa Yukichi in Japan and William Shakespeare, Percy Bysshe Shelley, or Martin Luther King in the English-speaking world.

Functional strategies, such as the reception-oriented strategies on the right side, are frequently chosen for functional texts such as instructions and guidelines. For the English reader of an instruction manual for a Toyota car, for example, the provenance and the language of the source text are of no importance

whatsoever, since the only goal of reading the instructions is to make the car work.

Though dichotomies as the ones presented above are useful eye-openers, they rarely work in practice. In the real world, it is more constructive to operate with a scale of strategies extending from strictly respecting the source text to completely doing away with it. Such a scale is illustrated below:



In this book, we mainly adopt an intermediary position; for didactic reasons we employ a linguistic, source-oriented approach to the description of translation between Japanese and English, but using units of translation which also include macro-units such as sentence, sentence linking, etc., we approach the target text dimension. Our focus on the source language and the Japanese translation units and their renderings into English does not mean, however, that we recommend a strict linguistic procedure as a general strategy when translating between these two languages. For every text the translator must reflect upon the specific function the new text has to fulfil in the new context: that is, for whom, where and when. This implies a truly functional perspective on translation, where it is the main function of the target text that determines the global strategy. In such a perspective, texts can be divided into three main groups (Reiss 1976): **expressive texts**, which focus on the attitude and sentiments of the sender (1<sup>st</sup> person), **operative texts**, which appeal to the receiver (2<sup>nd</sup> person), and **informative texts**, the main aim of which is to represent information about objects and phenomena (3<sup>rd</sup> person). This distinction can be illustrated as below (inspired by Bühler's triangle; Bühler 1934):

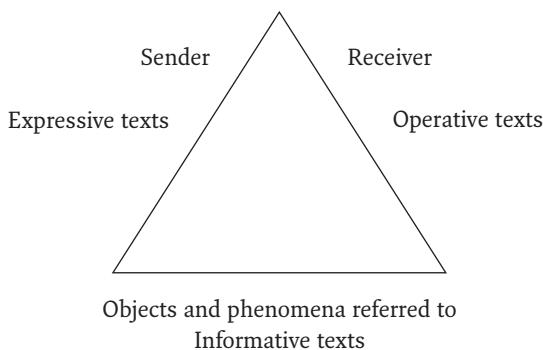


Figure 2. Three text types

It should be clear that among the strategies mentioned above, source-oriented strategies should be chosen for expressive texts, whereas receiver-oriented strategies fit operative texts. Informative texts are probably also rendered best by using a receiver-oriented strategy, since the purpose of an informative text is to make an informative content cognitively available to the new readers.

Before illustrating a source and a target close strategy, respectively, with two texts translated from Japanese into English, let us close this introduction to global strategies by quoting the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1813), who also distinguishes two methods of translating and expresses it in a way which is worth remembering:

Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and *moves the reader toward him*. Or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and *moves the author toward him* (Venuti 1998, 242; our emphasis).

### 3.1.1 Examples of choosing a global strategy

#### Expressive texts

The following poem by Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956) was written about his wife, Chieko, who was a painter, but never fulfilled her ambitions of painting because of her husband's demands on her time and support, and because of his image of her as a perfect Japanese wife. Chieko eventually became mentally ill and ended up in an asylum. While this is interesting background knowledge for the translator, it is actually not strictly necessary in order to translate the poem well.

1. 智恵子は東京に空がないという、	<i>Chieko ha Tōkyō no sora ga nai to iu</i>
本当の空が見たいという。	<i>Hontō no sora ga mitai to iu.</i>
私はおどろいて空を見る。	<i>Watakushi ha odoroite sora wo miru</i>
桜若葉のあいだにあるのは、	<i>Sakura wakaba no aida ni aru no ha,</i>
切っても切れない	<i>kittemo kirenai</i>
むかしなじみのきれいな空だ。	<i>Mukashinajimi no kirei na sora da</i>
どんよりけむる地平のぼかしは	<i>Donyori kemuru chihei no bokashi ha</i>
うすもも色の朝のしめりだ。	<i>Usumomoiro no asa no shimeri da.</i>
智恵子は遠くを見ながら言う。	<i>Chieko ha tōku wo minagara iu.</i>
阿多多羅山の山の上に	<i>Atatarayama no yama no ue ni</i>
毎日出ている青い空が	<i>mainichi dete iru aoi sora ga</i>
智恵子の本当の空だという。	<i>Chieko no hontō no sora da to iu.</i>
あどけない空の話である。	<i>Adokenai sora no hanashi de aru.</i>

In the translation of this poem, we should preserve the tone and wording of the original as much as possible to be faithful to the author and to convey his feelings and the situation to the reader of the translation. An attempt at doing so might produce, for instance:

Chieko says there is no sky in Tokyo.  
She wants to see the real sky.  
Surprised, I look up at the sky.  
What I see between the young cherry leaves  
Is the beautiful endless sky which  
I have known all my life.  
The mist over the heavy, smoky horizon  
Is the dampness of the peach-coloured morning.  
Chieko looks far away and says:  
“The blue sky that appears every day  
Over the top of the Atatara mountains,  
Is my real sky”.

It is an innocent tale of the sky.

Apart from syntactic changes necessary to accommodate English grammar, very few concessions to function have been made in this translation. It is very close to the original and respects the author's style, and while not necessarily elegant, it still manages to convey a poetic feeling in English.

### *Operative texts*

The following is a brief example from a leaflet on customer support accompanying a Japanese digital camera. Japanese is assumed to be the source language, which has then been translated. First, the two texts will be presented in their entirety:

#### 2a. [Company name] 修理サービスご相談窓口

お買い求めいただいた商品の保証地域は、お手元の保証書に記載した地域に限定させていただいている。ここに書かれている内容は大事な情報ですので、大切に保管してください。製品についてのお問い合わせ先は、製品本体の取扱説明書でご確認ください。

#### 2b. Customer Support

The warranty of the product(s) is effective only in the country written on the certificate.

Please safekeep (sic!) this sheet as it contains important information.

The immediate impression is that the Japanese source text is a great deal longer than the English text. This is caused by two factors, namely the genre- and cultural expectation among Japanese customers for very elaborate instructions and the wish of the factory to show extreme politeness towards their customers.

The Japanese text has three sentences, whereas the English text has only two. The first Japanese sentence says:

2a(1) *O-kaimotome itadaita shōhin no hoshō chiiki ha, o-temoto no hoshōsho ni kisai shita chiiki ni gentei sasete itadaiteimasu*

The sentence has three primary syntagms:

2a(2) *o-kaimotome itadaita shōhin no hoshō chiiki ha,*  
 “the guarantee area for the product you have bought”  
*o-temoto no hoshōsho ni kisai shita chiiki ni*  
 “the area written on the warranty you have”  
*gentei sasete itadaiteimasu*  
 “is limited to”.

A literal translation would yield

2b(1) “We [allow ourselves the importunity to] limit the warranty areas for the product you have [kindly] bought from us to the areas recorded in the warranty certificate in your possession”

The second Japanese sentence reads:

2a(3) *Koko ni kakareteiru naiyō ha daijina jōhō desu node, taisetsu ni hokan shite kudasai.*

A literal translation would give the following sentence:

2b(2) “The content written here is precious information, so please preserve it with care”.

The third Japanese sentence says:

2a(4) *Seihin ni tsuite no o-toiawasesaki ha, seihin hontai no toriatsukai set-sumeisho de go-kakunin kudasai.*

The English meaning of this sentence is

2b(3) “For the addresses of where to direct enquiries regarding the product, please see the instructions for use enclosed with the product”.

This sentence, however, is absent from the official English translation, perhaps because non-Japanese customers do not need to be told to look in the instruction booklet for contact addresses regarding the product.

The English version provided by the company is devoid of polite phrases (like the Japanese prefix *o-*, and auxiliaries, such as *-itadaki* and *-masu*), and it has been kept much simpler overall. Still, the information content of the first two sentences is identical – namely that the warranty only works in the country where the product is bought (a common phenomenon in the case of parallel import, i.e. when the country of the product’s origin is not the original exporter), and that one should keep this sheet of paper which contains this information, presumably in order not to forget that one has no claim on the producer of the product.

The Japanese text, however, shows a deferential attitude to the customer by seeming to regret the fact that they cannot extend their help in the eventuality of a need for repairs. This highly deferential style is the one normally used by companies or shops towards customers in Japan. In the English text, only the raw information is conveyed, apart from the polite “please” in the second paragraph.

This custom leaflet presents just one example of the use of a functional strategy. It is, however, often the case that one or the other extreme of the dichotomy is too radical, and that the translator prefers an intermediate strategy, which may consist, for example, in rendering the style of a specific writer in such a

way that the stylistic effects would be understood and interpreted as such by the new reader.

### *Informative texts*

To illustrate the concept of an informative text, we have chosen a small excerpt which explains the conditions for employing foreigners as civil servants:

3a. 外国人の公務員採用というのは、世界的に見ても国によって違います。例えば  
アメリカでは契約による公務就労は国籍を問わないが、契約職員は管理職に  
就けないとされているようですし、採用という点で国家公務員、地方公務員を  
問わずOKというスウェーデン、オランダ、地方公務員なら良いというイギリス、  
ノルウェー、また、国、地方を問わず一切駄目というフランスなどいろいろで  
す。

*Gaikokujin no kōmuin saiyō to iu no ha,*  
Foreigner ATTR civil servant employment ATTR NOM TOP  
*Sekaiteki ni mitemo kuni ni yotte chigaimasu.*  
around the world LOC look CON country according to be different  
*Tatoeba Amerika de ha kiyaku ni yoru kōmushuurō ha kokuseki wo towanai ga,*

For ex. America LOC TOP contract “by” public service TOP nationality  
OBJ not ask but

*kiyaku shokuin ha kanrishoku ni tsukenai to sarete iru yō desu shi,*  
contract worker TOP managerial job LOC cannot get QUOT is said appar-  
ently and

*saiyō to iu ten de kokka kōmuin, chihō kōmuin wo towazu OK*  
Employment ATTR point LOC state civil servant, local civil servant OBJ  
not ask OK

*toiu Sueden, Oranda, chihō kōmuin nara yoi to iu Igirisu, Noru-  
uee,*

ATTR Sweden, Holland, local civil servant if it is good ATTR England,  
Norway

*mata, kuni, chihō wo towazu issai dame to iu Furansu nado iroiro desu.*  
And, state local OBJ not ask all no good ATTR France f.ex. diverse is

One characteristic of this text is the long enumeration of different rules for employing foreigners as civil servants in different countries. Since the text is intended to be informative, this enumeration structure does not necessarily have to be reproduced in the English text, and the translator might want to divide the second of the two sentences into several smaller sentences:

3b. If you look around the world, the employment of foreigners as civil servants differs from country to country. For instance in America, nationality is not a problem for public service as long as you are working on a contract. There is, however, a rule that prevents contract workers from occupying managerial positions. In Sweden and the Netherlands, you can become a civil servant at both the local and the national level, regardless of your nationality. In England and Norway you can become a civil servant at the local level only, and in France no foreigner can be employed as a civil servant, neither at the local nor at the national level.

We can thus conclude that a translator, when translating, should keep in mind that the new receivers be put in the same interpretative conditions by presenting them with a text that demands as little – or as much – cognitive effort in constructing a coherent picture of its content and function. To do so, it is necessary to determine what type of text one is dealing with and, on the basis of that, decide where in the continuum between literal, linguistic, and faithful versus free, communicative/functional or unfaithful one's translation of a specific text could be placed.

### 3.1.2 Respecting genre

When deciding upon a global strategy, the translator should also respect the **genre** to which the source text belongs. A genre is a conventionalised, preformatted linguistic and textual structure, used repeatedly in similar communicative situations. Genre recognition plays an essential part in text understanding, because it fuels genre **expectations**, which operate **top-down** in the interpretation process. Just as the sender of the source text has at hand an array of conventionalised genre blueprints, the linguistic forms of which are easily recognisable by the receiver, the translator should assure – by choosing the adequate genre

signals and forms in the target language – that the target text, too, can be processed from the very start, top-down, as belonging to a specific genre. If incorrect genre expectations are activated, understanding of the source text might be totally erroneous. A well-known genre is that of folk- or fairytales:

4a. むかし、むかし、あるところに、おじいさんとおばあさんがおりました。

*Mukashi, mukashi, aru tokoro ni, ojiisan to obaasan ga orimashita.*

A very literal translation would be:

4b(1) “In the old, old days, in a certain place, lived an old man and an old woman.”

However, the introduction, *mukashi mukashi*, signals an old-fashioned fairytale, and these have conventional introductions in English as well. It would thus ruin the genre expectation of the target language reader if the translator chose to write for instance “A long time ago” or “In the old days”. Instead the translator should choose the conventional English fairytale introduction, “Once upon a time”:

4b(2) “Once upon a time there was an old couple who lived in a certain place.”

Or: “Once upon a time, there was an old man and his wife – it matters not where they lived – ...”

The question of genre will be treated more extensively in Chapter 7, so here we simply wish to mention **genre** as an extremely important element in deciding upon one’s global strategy.

## 3.2 Local strategies

After having decided upon a specific global strategy indicating how the source text should be read by the new receiver, and with which function, the translator can finally settle on the specific linguistic expressions to be used in the target text. These local choices of lexical items and syntactic structures, made step by

step in the transfer process, can be conceived of as **local strategies**. The concept *strategy* evokes that a goal can be obtained by several different means, but that one specific means is (considered) better than another.

For local strategies as well, dichotomies have been suggested, namely:

direct strategies	vs	indirect strategies
obligatory strategies	vs	facultative strategies.

**Direct strategies**, which consist in choosing the directly corresponding word, expression or construction in the target language, are rare when translating between very dissimilar languages, as is the case with Japanese and English. Although Japanese is rich in imported words, for instance **loanwords**, of English origin, such as *basu*, “bus”, *sakkaa*, “soccer”, *shatsu*, “shirt”, etc., even loanwords cannot always be confidently translated into the English words they are derived from. The English loanword *miruku* comes from “milk”, but it co-exists with the Sino-Japanese word *gyuunyuu*, which means “milk”. *Miruku* is therefore only used in the meaning of “sweet canned milk”. Similarly, *raisu* co-exists with *gohan*, and both mean “rice”, but *gohan* is used when rice is served in a bowl, and *raisu* is only used when rice is served on a plate in connection with western food.

Some words look like English loanwords, but are Japanese constructions that have no equivalent in English. An example of such a **false friend** is *wanmankaa*, \*“one-man-car”, an expression used about busses that have no extra personnel to sell tickets or announce stops. All these functions are carried out by “one man”, namely the bus-driver. Other similar examples are *sarariiman*, \*“salary-man” for a “white-collar worker”, and *wanpiisu*, \*“one-piece” for a woman’s “dress”.

Other words have changed their meaning when imported from Japanese into English. One example is *kimono*, which in Japanese is a formal dress for wearing in public, whereas out-

side of Japan it is something you wear after taking a bath or before getting dressed. An older example is “tycoon” (a rich and powerful businessman), which derives from *taikun*, the title “great prince”, used for the *shōgun* or military leader of Japan to impress the first foreigners who came to Japan in the 1850s. As a general rule, ***indirect strategies***, for instance the choice of different combinations of ***semes*** (discussed in Chapter 4.1), in, between, and across words, as well as syntactic arrangements far removed from the original, are more appropriate when dealing with translation from Japanese into English.

For the second dichotomy, ***obligatory strategies*** are called for when there is no lexical or syntactic equivalent in the target language. Obligatory changes, for instance alteration of word classes, of syntactic structure, and of communicative ordering of phrases within a sentence, are predominant when translating from Japanese and English, because of their all-encompassing structural differences.

Obligatory change is called for in sentences like the following with a topic construction followed by a subject:

5a. 象は鼻が長い。

Zō ha hana ga nagai

Elephant TOP nose SUBJ long

5b. ?\*As for elephants, their noses are long.

“Elephants have long noses.”

Another example is the famous phrase which should be imagined as spoken when several people are sitting in a restaurant, choosing from the menu card:

6a. 僕はうなぎだ。

Boku ha unagi da

I TOP eel be (am)

6b. ?\*I am an eel

“I’ll have the eel” or “I want eel”

The extremely flexible usage of the copula in Japanese cannot always be translated by employing the English copula, and instead a different verb must be substituted, such as “want” in the above example.

The following is an example in which a change of word class is necessary:

7a. 鈴木さんに乾杯の音頭を頼みましょう。

*Suzuki-san ni            kanpai no ondō wo    tanomimashō.*

Mr Suzuki IND OBJ a toast proposal OBJ let us ask

7b. “Let’s ask Mr Suzuki to propose a toast.”

The noun phrase *kanpai no ondō* becomes a verb phrase in English: to propose a toast.

Similarly in the following excerpt from the text on swimming in Chapter 2:

8a. 力で多少劣っても技術で上回ることができる。

*Chikara de tashō otottemo        gjijutsu de uwamawaru koto ga dekiru*

Strength in somewhat be behind-even though technique in is better  
NOM SUBJ can

8b. “One can make up for somewhat inferior strength by superior technique.”

Both *chikara de ototte* and *gijutsu de uwamawaru* consist of a noun followed by a postposition and then a verb – and both are translated into constructions made up of an adjective followed by a noun in English. The verbal element in the two expressions is then moved out of these expressions and into the English “make up for”.

Interesting are ***facultative strategies***, which present themselves when a lexical expression – or syntactic construction – exists in a similar or quasi-similar form in both source and target language – something, however, that occurs infrequently

between Japanese and English. Nevertheless, there are cases in which the translator might be tempted to simply transfer the source language expression into the corresponding target language expression. This strategy presents a potential trap, in that the *use* of the expression in question might differ widely between two languages. One and the same expression might be very frequent in one language and infrequent in another, or *vice versa*. The *frequency* of an expression has an impact on the way the expression is conceived in the language community: the more frequent an expression, the more natural and stereotypical it is conceived to be, and consequently the more *unmarked*. And *vice versa*: the less frequent an expression, the more its use tends to arouse an abnormal and atypical reading, in which (too) much semantic and/or pragmatic meaning is added – making the expression more *marked*. This principle of *degree of markedness* is extremely important to keep in mind in the transfer process. The principle of degree of markedness might be formulated as an overarching *local strategy of degree of markedness*:

*Choose an expression in the target language which is marked to the same degree as in the source language, neither more nor less.*

This strategy implies that even apparent equivalences between languages should be handled with care, and although the problem is not acute when it comes to Japanese and English, there are still examples of both *overmarking* and *undermarking* in translations between the two languages. This will be presented in more detail in Chapters 4–6.

### 3.3 Losses and gains

The above strategies, global and local, can be supplemented with the notions of *loss* and *gain*, or *loss* and *compensation*. It is almost unavoidable that a translated text should present some losses compared to the source text: for example the loss

of small semantic features, of meaning conveyed by information structure, or of subtle inferences and hints which form part of the source text receivers' background knowledge. Some losses can be *gained* or *compensated for* by using other linguistic means. Compensation as a very general translation strategy can be effectuated close to the loss, as advocated below:

Compensation is said to occur when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence (Newmark 1988, 90; quoted in Harvey 1998, 39).

Compensation for a lost source effect can also be dispersed or displaced to a completely different part of the target text, as pointed out here:

It matters less where exactly the impression is conveyed than that it is conveyed to an equivalent extent (Baker 1992, 78).

It is most important when translating to keep in mind the phenomenon of loss together with the strategy of compensation, and still avoid being trapped by one of the most frequent *universals of translation*, namely *explicitation*.

A *universal of translation* is defined as a characterising feature, which is found more frequently in translated texts than in texts produced in the original language. Explication consists in *amplifying* what is said in the source text, by adding material, filling out elliptical constructions, spelling out inferences, adding connectors to implicit rhetorical relations, explaining cultural references, and the like. There exists an opposite tendency in translated texts, namely the translation universal of *simplification*. This means leaving out linguistic material, such as dispensing with rhymes and rhythms, discarding metaphorical expressions, dropping contextual references, and so forth. Translators can often be pressed to leave out untranslatable

expressions, a loss, however, which they should try to compensate for in another part, or by other means in the text.

In PART II, Chapters 4 to 7, global and especially local strategies will reappear when we describe in detail how different units of translation identified in Japanese texts or text fragments can be adequately translated into English, while constantly monitoring that each local choice of linguistic expression is in accordance with the global strategy adopted.

# PART II

UNITS OF TRANSLATION AND LOCAL  
STRATEGIES FOR THEIR TRANSFER



## CHAPTER 4

# Micro-units I: The word and beneath

When addressing the question of **how** to translate, we must inevitably reformulate it as two questions: **What** to translate and **into what?** In the next sections, we propose a conceptual framework describing different **units of translation** which help the translator first identify “what to translate”, and, second, decide upon the “into what”, thus helping the translator choose the target language expressions for the specific units settled upon in the source text. The progression in the next chapters will be from **micro-units**, spanning from semes and words over phrases, to **macro-units**, i.e. sentences, which may be linked by different cohesive devices into texts. We regard the sentence as a macro-unit because it constitutes the immediate building block for forming texts. The treatment of micro-units will be divided into two chapters, of which Chapter 4 will treat “the word and beneath” (micro-units I) and Chapter 5 will treat various types of phrases (micro-units II).

## 4.1 Semes

**Semes** or **semantic features** are the smallest units a translator needs to work with. They are the minimal meaning units in language, and since one word can contain several semes, semes are smaller than words. Furthermore, semes cannot be isolated as overt parts of the word in the way that morphemes can – they are inherent in the word and denote just one of a number

of meanings carried by that word. The word ***semantics*** is used about the study of semes.

When you look up a word (lexeme) in a bilingual dictionary, you often find many different possible translations for that word. This is because each translation will represent only some but not all of the possible meanings of the totality of semes, which may be present in that particular ***lexeme***. But there is another factor at play, namely the fact that languages do not cast “the same net” over the “amorphous and undivided continuum” of meaning in which humans are immersed (Hjelmslev 1943, 48). There is potentially an endless and nebulous “continuum of meaning” around us, but every language helps us orient ourselves in this vague substance by making distinctions via ***lexicalising***, i.e. by naming and categorising, each language in its own specific way. This entails that a corresponding designation of a particular thing, phenomenon, etc., in one language may not cover exactly the same meaning zone in another. The two designations may be oblique to one another. For instance, there is no exact correspondence among the semes included in the following words to do with [tree] in Japanese and English:

1.

木 <i>ki</i>	林 <i>hayashi</i>	森 <i>mori</i>
Tree	Wood	forest

木 *Ki* means “a tree”, but also the material “wood”

林 *Hayashi* means a small forest, called “a wood” in English

森 *Mori* is a larger forest, which, depending on its size, can correspond to either “wood” or “forest” in English

Another example is the verb “wear” in English. When you look for a corresponding word in Japanese, you may be presented with *kiru*. However, if your Japanese text is about wearing shoes, trousers, hats or gloves, none of them will be expressed by the word *kiru*. This is because, unlike “wear”, *kiru* is only used for

items of clothing that cover (at least) your upper body. Thus, for instance:

2a. 黄色いワンピースを着ています。

*Kiroi wanpiisu wo kite imasu.*

Yellow dress    OBJ is wearing

“She is wearing a yellow dress.”

But:

2b. 青いズボンをはいています。

*Aoi zubon    wo haite imasu.*

Blue trousers    OBJ is wearing

“He is wearing (a pair of) blue trousers.”

2c. 帽子をかぶっています。

*Bōshi wo kabutte imasu.*

Hat    OBJ is wearing

“S/he wears a hat.”

2d. 寒いから、手袋をはめたほうがいい。

*Samui kara,    tebukuro wo hameta hō ga ii.*

Is cold because, gloves    OBJ wore alternative SUBJ will be good

“It is cold, so you had better wear gloves.”

Similarly, one can talk about “eating” in English as an activity without any indication of what is actually being eaten. In Japanese, however, we cannot use the verb *taberu* (eat) without specifying more or less explicitly what is being eaten. In the example of an exchange of question and answer below, the object being eaten is not specified, since *gohan* is used not only about “rice”, but also about “food” and “meals” in general. *Gohan* may be said to be the default object for *taberu* when nothing else is specified.

## 3. 今、何してる?

Ima, nani shite ru?

Now what are doing

"What are you doing just now?"

ごはんを食べる*Gohan wo tabete ru*

rice/food/meal OBJ am eating

"I am eating"

As *gohan* is an unmarked object, the translation should not be as below, because that would specifically mark *gohan* and give it an unwarranted prominent place in the English sentence:

3a. \*I am eating food/rice/a meal.

The object required by *taberu* should only be translated if it is emphasised (marked), such as in

3b. とってもおいしい天ぷらを食べている。

*Tottemo oishii tempura wo tabete iru.*Very delicious *tempura* OBJ am eating"I am eating very delicious tempura."

In the above two cases, Japanese lacks **superordinate** verbs corresponding to English "wear" and "eat"; instead Japanese lexicalises actions as these at a subordinate and more **specified** level, including more semantic features, i.e. with a stronger **intension**. This entails that the **extension**, i.e. the domain of phenomena it covers, is more restricted, which further entails, for instance in the case of the words for "wear", more restrictions on the choice of object (cf. the examples above).

When translating a very specified term into a language which usually uses a less specified one, i.e. a superordinate lexeme, a so-called **hyperonym**, one should meticulously consider

whether the superordinate term, as “wear” or “eat”, will suffice, or whether a more specified item, **a hyponym**, is available and might be preferable. Very often a more specified term will be more heavily **marked** in the target language and should therefore be avoided.

There are, however, also examples of Japanese having the unspecified **hyperonym** with English having the more specified expressions. One such example is the Japanese adjective *aoi*, which can be used for all of the English words “green”, “blue”, and “pale”. The nominal head of the adjective phrase in the Japanese sentence will decide which alternative to use, as may be seen from the following examples:

4a. 空が青い。*Sora ga aoi*. (sky-SUBJ-blue)

“The sky is blue.”

4b. 信号が青い。*Shingō ga aoi*. (traffic light-SUBJ-green)

“There is a green light.”

4c. 若葉が青い。*Wakaba ga aoi*. (young leaves-SUBJ-green)

“The new leaves are green.”

4d. 顔が青い。*Kao ga aoi*. (face-SUBJ-pale)

“S/he has a pale complexion.”

The **hyperonym/hyponym** relation may be illustrated as follows:

Superordinate level	English	Japanese
Hyperonym – general, vague term	“wear”	<i>aoi</i>
Small intension		
Large extension		
Subordinate level	Japanese	English
Hyponym – specified, precise term	<i>kiru</i>	“blue”
Large intension	<i>haku</i>	“green”
Small extension	<i>kaburu</i>	“pale”
	<i>hameru</i>	

Figure 3. Differences in level of lexicalisation

A word can have within it many different semes, but not all of them are in use at the same time. You may say that words do not HAVE meanings, but that they GET meanings in different contexts. Words have **potential meanings**. Whether, for example, the word *aoi* has to be translated as “green”, “blue”, or “pale” depends on the object it is used to describe.

For the translator, it is important to sort out the exact semes that are present in the words of the source text and then decide which of these semes are necessary in the target text and whether more semes are needed to create an adequate translation. This means that when you are producing your translation, you should make sure that all the necessary semantic features are preserved – or inserted – in the target text, if possible. Only then can the translation be said to be an **adequate** translation.

If some semes are missing in the target text, it is said to be **under-translated**.

If new semes are added to the target text, it is said to be **over-translated**.

If some semes are imprecisely reproduced in the target text, the translation is said to be **imprecise**.

If some semes are wrongly represented in the target text, the translation is said to be ***misleading***.

We can present this symbolically by assuming that the word in the source text X has the semes a, b, and c (Lundquist 2007, 97):

Source text word = X = a, b, c

Thus when translating into the target word Y, we should ideally get:

Adequate translation = Y = a, b, c

And not:

Under-translation = Y = a, b,  $\frac{1}{2}$  c

Over-translation = Y = a, b, c + d

Imprecise translation = Y = a, b, d

Misleading translation = Y = d, e, f

However, especially in Japanese-English translation, under- and over-translation do not necessarily imply an inadequate translation. Differences between the source and the target language often make both over-translation and under-translation inevitable, or even obligatory. Thus the following possibilities should be included as adequate translations:

Inevitable under-translation = Y = a, b

Inevitable over-translation = Y = a, b, c, f

In reality, you will often need two (or more) words in the translation to cover the semes a, b, and c. Or, conversely, two (or

more) words in the basis text may be covered by one word in the translation. For example:

*Hanashidashimashita* is one word in Japanese. It contains the following semes:

5a. 話し出しました *hanashi-dashi-mashi-ta*

A subject (defined by context) (zero)

The act of speaking (*hanash[i]*)

The act of beginning (-*dash[i]*)

Level of formality (*mashi[i]*)

Past tense (*ta*)

It has to be translated into English as:

5b. “S/he/they began to speak” which contains the following semes:

Subject (“S/he/they”)

The act of beginning (“beg[i]n”)

Past tense (“[beg]a[n]”)

The infinitive marker (“to”)

The act of speaking (“speak”)

The differences in the above examples can be illustrated in the following table:

	Subject	Speaking	Beginning	formality	past tense	infinitive
Japanese	x/- seme	x word	x morpheme	x morpheme	x morpheme	-
English	x word	x word	x word	-	x morpheme	x morpheme

Figure 4. Semes in Japanese and English

English does not have any morphological expression of **formality** in verbs, so *mashi* has to be left out of the translation (**inevitable or obligatory under-translation**). Formality can, however, be signalled by other means in English, such as body language, tone of voice, etc. Similarly, Japanese does not have a specific marker for the infinitive form, so “to” has to be added (**obliga-**

**tory over-translation).** In this way we have to **compensate** for the differences between these two languages.

Semes also help to find **semantic isotopies** in the text, i.e. words or expressions that have related meanings. For instance the sentence:

6. 国際結婚のご夫婦が、横浜に住んでいた。旦那さんはアメリカ人で奥さんは日本人でした。

*Kokusai kekkon no gofuuufu ga Yokohama ni sundeita.*

International marriage ATTR married couple SUBJ Yokohama LOC lived

*Dannasan ha amerikajin de, okusan ha nihonjin deshita.*

Husband TOP an American being, wife TOP a Japanese was

“An intercultural couple lived in Yokohama. The husband was American, and the wife was Japanese.”

This sentence has two isotopies

*Gofuuufu* (couple) → *dannasan/okusan* (husband/wife)

*Kokusai* (international) → *amerikajin/nihonjin* (American/Japanese)

*Gofuuufu* includes husband and wife, and *kokusai* includes the nationalities, Japanese and American. When translating, it is important to observe and, as far as possible, preserve such isotopies in a text. Isotopies provide coherence in a text, and the coherence of the translated text depends to a large degree on the translator's ability to preserve textual isotopies.

Often translators from Japanese **explicate** or **simplify** by unnecessarily adding or subtracting semes and thus they end up producing less than adequate translations. In a newspaper column about a book, written by the mother of a young girl who was stabbed to death in a school massacre, we find the following sentences based on the text of the bereaved mother's book:

7. 凶行を思い出させる包丁が持てない。小学生の女の子を見ると背中に包丁が突き刺さっている。悪夢と現実とが入り交じる日々が長く続いた。

*Kyōkō wo omoidasaseru hōchō ga motenai.*

Crime OBJ cause to remember bread knife SUBJ cannot hold

*Shōgakusei no onna no ko wo miru to*

Primary school student ATTR female ATTR child OBJ see when

*senaka ni hōchō ga tsukisasatte iru.*

back LOC bread knife SUBJ is sticking out

*Akumu to genjitsu ga irimajiru hibi ga nagaku tsuzuita.*

Nightmare and reality SUBJ get mixed up days SUBJ long continued

7a. “She still cannot bring herself to pick up a knife because it reminds her of the brutal crime. When she sees elementary school girls, she “sees” a knife sticking in their backs. For a long time, she was troubled by these nightmarish visions.” (*Asahi Shinbun, Tensei Jingo*, August 29, 2003)

The Japanese text does not clarify whether this excerpt is a direct quotation from the book, but if it is, the pronoun used in the translation could well be “I”, since there is no overt subject in the Japanese text.

The official translation is rather free. While the first sentence makes only the changes necessary to produce an easy flow in the English text, the second sentence has departed more from the original. The Japanese text is quite simple: “when she sees primary school girls, they have knives stuck in their backs”, but the translator has felt it necessary to put “sees” in quotation marks to ensure that the reader knows that the mother is not really seeing girls with bread knives in their backs. These quotation marks detract from the horror and immediacy of the Japanese sentence. In the third sentence, the translator has left out quite a lot of semes. The literal meaning of the sentence is that “days when nightmare and reality were mixed up continued for a long time”, but the translator wants to remind us again that we are talking about visions, and thereby he further deprives the reader of the directness and simplicity of the Japanese sentences. The verbs have no overt subject, and the translator has chosen the

third person. However, even though there are no quotation marks around the section in the Japanese text, they could still be interpreted as quotations from the mother's book, and a first person subject might have better conveyed the horror experienced:

7b. "I couldn't hold a bread knife as it made me think of my daughter's murderer. Whenever I saw a primary school girl, a knife would be sticking out of her back. For a long time I kept mixing up nightmare and reality."

## 4.2 Morphemes

Whereas the different semes covered by one word cannot be distinguished overtly, morphemes can generally be distinguished as one or more syllables, or at least one letter. Thus, the word 学校 *gak-kō* consists of two morphemes: *gak-* (study) and *-kō* (building). Together, the two mean "school". These two morphemes do not exist by themselves in Japanese but only in connection with other morphemes – and therefore they are called **bound morphemes**.

In the English word "boys" there are also two morphemes: boy and *-s*. The latter is a bound morpheme, which denotes a plural meaning when added to a noun. "Boy" is a **free morpheme** (or root) as it does not need anything else to be accepted as a word in its own right.

In the Japanese expression 飲みたいです *nom-i-ta-i des-u*, there are six morphemes: *nom* (drink); *i* (continuative ending); *ta* (auxiliary denoting wish); *i* (adjective final form); *des* (auxiliary denoting formality); and *u* (verb final form).

It is of course imperative for a translator to recognise morphemes and know their meanings, not least when translating from Japanese, where it can be absolutely crucial not to overlook any morphemes in, for instance, a long string of auxiliaries following a main verb. In the sentence quoted above, *kyō-kō wo omo-i-das-a-seru hō-chō wo mot-e-na-i*, the attributive verb which modifies *hōchō* (bread knife) consists of six morphemes: *omo* (think); *i* (continuative ending); *das* (auxiliary verb, "begin"); *a* (ending that precedes e.g. the causative auxiliary); *ser* (causative

auxiliary); and *u* (verb final form). The literal meaning is thus “cause to begin to think of”, which is adequately translated as “remind of”. The other verb in the sentence, *mot-e-na-i*, has four morphemes: *mot* (hold), *e* (potential ending), *na* (negative auxiliary), and *i* (adjective final form).

For an experienced translator, morphological analysis is in most cases carried out automatically, since bound morphemes generally belong to the area of grammar. Even for students of translation, the basic grammar of Japanese will normally be mastered before they embark on the study of translation.

### 4.3 Words and compound words

Translation students often think in terms of words, and, indeed, much language teaching focuses on the learning of vocabulary, i.e. words. However, as we have seen above, words are far from unambiguous. They contain several different meaning components (semes) within them that can be activated differently in different contexts – we say that they are *polysemic*. Therefore, if you look up a word in a bilingual dictionary, you may well end up more confused than enlightened.

Furthermore, many words are compounds of two or more words, especially in a language such as Japanese where loans from Chinese abound. When the Japanese borrowed a large number of Chinese words in connection with adopting Chinese writing, such words would retain the Chinese structure of having one morpheme correspond to one Chinese character. Later, the Japanese formed new words based on the principle of using one character for one morpheme with the result that a large number of words are easily discernable as consisting of several morphemes, many of which can exist independently as words in themselves. For instance, 学校教育 *gakkōkyōiku* (“primary education”) is composed of two independent words, *gakkō* (school) and *kyōiku* (education). Each of the two words in the compound further consists of two morphemes, which do not exist independently, namely *gak* (study) and *kō* (building), and *kyō* (teach)

and *iku* (nurture).<sup>2</sup> Since Japanese does not separate words by spaces, we may come across rather long strings of characters presenting themselves as one word, such as for instance

8a. 国語学研究所総合委員会 *koku-go-gaku-ken-kyuu-jo-sō-gō-i-in-kai*

which in English would have to come out as a phrase containing several distinct words:

8b. “The General Council of the Institute for the Study of the National Language”

The exact meaning of a specific word or compound in a specific text is determined by the context, but as a translator you will often come across situations, like the above, in which one word in the original language needs to be translated by several words in the target language – or *vice versa*. For instance, the Japanese word *sha-in* (company-member) denotes an employee in a private company, as in

9. トップダウンの経営改革に、多くの社員が不満を持っている。

*Toppu daun no keiei kaikaku ni ōku no shain ga*

Top-down ATTR management reform INDIR OBJ many employees  
SUBJ

*fuman wo motteiru.*

dissatisfaction OBJ are having

“Many employees [in the company] are dissatisfied with the top-down management reform.”

If the preceding sentences have specified that the text is about a particular business company, the English translation “employees” is sufficient. However, if that is not the case, “employees”

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2 The *kanji* used to write each of these morphemes may, of course, appear independently when used to write other words, but in the context of this book we are speaking of words and morphemes independently of the writing system.

is too general an English concept to use for *sha-in* because “employee” in English is a ***superordinate*** term, which refers to any kind of employed worker. Teachers, for instance, are also “employees”, but they are not *sha-in*. If there is no ***antecedent*** to this sentence which specifically mentions a company or companies in general, *sha-in* must therefore be translated as “the company employees” or “employees in the company”.

We have noted that most words are polysemic and that the semes included in a word in the source language only rarely correspond exactly to the semes included in a word in the target language. For instance, the word “water” in English has (at least) two possible equivalents in Japanese, depending on the temperature of the water. *Mizu* is cold water, whereas *oyu* denotes hot or boiled water:

10.

水	お湯
<i>mizu</i>	<i>o-yu</i>
“water”	

The translator needs to rely on his or her own background knowledge and the context in which the word appears in order to choose the correct English specification for each of these two Japanese words.

Some words in Japanese are rather vague and general. Such words can be said to have a large area of ***extension***; i.e. they can combine with many different words to form new lexical collocations. Perhaps the most extreme example is the support verb *suru* (basic meaning: “do”), which can follow a large number of nouns (grammatically these nouns are objects), and which, by doing so, creates another verb with the specific meaning deriving from the noun. All the nouns that can be made into verbs by adding *suru* are of foreign (Chinese or Western) origin. For example:

11. 勉強する *benkyō suru* (study-do), “study”

質問する *shitsumon suru* (question-do), “ask [a question]”

研究する *kenkyū suru* (research-do), “do research, carry out research”

デートする *deeto suru* (date-do), “date, go on a date”

アピールする *apiiru suru* (appeal-do), “appeal, make an appeal”

Needless to say, an English translation involving the word “do” will only rarely be appropriate. The translator must deduce from the meaning of the object what the verbalised expression means. In itself, *suru* does not contain much lexical information, so looking it up in a dictionary is unlikely to result in a useful translation. *Suru* can appear in a very large number of different contexts that all produce different meanings, and a dictionary can only list a few of these possible contexts. Unless the specific context sought by the translator is listed, following the dictionary is almost certain to lead to a wrong or inadequate translation. Instead the translator needs to clarify the context and then search for the best possible equivalent within his or her own knowledge of the target language.

## 4.4 Fixed terms

Some words or compounds are terms for well-known entities and for these there are often well-established terms in other languages. Thus 国連 *kokuren* has to be translated as “United Nations”, regardless of context. 国会 *kokkai* is the term for the Japanese parliament, and it is conventionally translated as “The Diet”. 地下鉄 *chikatetsu* has traditionally been translated as “subway” (and not “underground” or “metro”), probably because of the strong American influence in postwar Japan. In such cases it is important that the translator makes sure to use the conventional and easily recognisable term in the target language.

These **fixed terms** are often listed in dictionaries, but when newer terms of this type turn up in a text you are translating, it may be better to do a search on the Internet than to try to find the words in a dictionary. For instance, the disagreement over the

territorial rights to the 尖閣 Senkaku (or 釣魚台 “Diao Yu Tai” in Chinese) Islands, situated between Taiwan and southern Japan, is always called a “dispute” in English-language newspapers. The Japanese term 尖閣諸島問題 *Senkakushotō mondai* uses the word *mondai* which, in other contexts, is more often translated into English as “problem”. In the specific context of the Senkaku Islands, however, it would be, if not wrong, then at least rather odd to translate the phrase as “the Senkaku Islands problem”.

When the text is concerned with more recent political events, the terms employed in the source language may have political implications. For instance, the massive protests at the Tianan-men Square in Beijing in 1989 have later been referred to as an “incident” (事件 “shijian”) in official Chinese references (if referred to at all). The same term is commonly used in the Japanese media where it is referred to as the 天安門事件 *ten-an-mon jiken* “The Tiananmen incident”. The English language media have used stronger terms, such as “massacre”, and according to your personal political opinions, you might feel inclined to translate *jiken* as “massacre”. The question, however, is whether doing so would not be a misrepresentation of the intentions expressed in the source text.

Other examples of this type of fixed terms are:

12. 湾岸戦争 *Wan-gan-sensō* (gulf-coast-war)  
“The Gulf War”
13. 大量破壊兵器 *tairyō-hakai-heiki* (large quantity-destruction-weapons)  
“weapons of mass destruction” or even “WMD”
14. 米国同時多発テロ *Beikoku-dōji-tahatsu-tero* (America-simultaneous-many attacks-terror)  
“9/11” or “the 9/11 attacks”
15. 北朝鮮拉致問題 *Kita-chōsen-rachi-mondai* (North-Korea-abduction-problem)  
“The North Korea abduction issue”

With terms of this kind, where both languages have well established nomenclature, the translation will sound odd or strange if the usually accepted expression is not used. When dealing with expressions or nomenclature in Japanese that have no established English translation, however, the translator must be the one to choose a translation that sounds natural within the framework of the language he or she is translating into.

## 4.5 Culturemes

Words or compounds that are names of cultural events like festivals and religious events are called **culturemes**. These can be difficult to translate, as there are rarely any established translations for them but rather competing ones offered by different translators and different dictionaries. The dictionary may give you only an explanation of the event or a single choice of translation, but different dictionaries may offer different terms. In these cases you are free to make a better choice of your own. For instance: お盆 *o-bon* is an autumn festival celebrating the return of the spirits of relatives who have died. It is often translated as “the *bon* festival”, but unless the reader already knows Japanese culture, this translation is meaningless. A more adequate translation will need at least an extra sentence, and since this may feel too heavy, some may add a footnote instead.

お花見 *o-hanami* means a picnic under the cherry blossom trees in early spring when the flowers bloom. Cherry blossoms are imbued with a number of cultural implications, because the cherry blossoms are a frequently employed metaphor for a short but heroic and beautiful life. Some have translated *o-hanami* as “cherry blossom viewing”, which may seem very odd to a reader not familiar with Japanese culture.

お正月 *o-shōgatsu* is the term for the Japanese New Year celebrations. Since New Year is celebrated in most cultures, it is easier to translate than festivals that are indigenous to Japan. However, the term *o-shōgatsu* means something quite different to a Japanese (namely, a family gathering in which the entrance

is decorated with pine branches and where special symbolic food is eaten) than “New Year’s party” means to for instance a British person (namely, partying and drinking with friends and perhaps gathering in Trafalgar Square to listen to Big Ben chiming at midnight). Thus, a simple and technically correct translation of *o-shōgatsu* as “New Year’s celebrations” may still be said to be inadequate to convey the intention of the original text.

One of the ingredients of *o-shōgatsu* is お年玉 *o-toshidama*, a small envelope containing money, which is given to children in the family or to the children of friends on New Year’s Day. This is familiar to Chinese readers because the same custom is found in China (as in Cantonese 利是 “lai see”), but for European or American readers an explanation is needed, and a suitable word or a paraphrase needs to be found. In most cases, translators use the Japanese word and add a sentence as explanation. For instance:

16. 元日には、お年玉はいつもらえるのかと首を長くしてまっていたものです。

*Ganjitsu ni wa, o-toshidama ha itsu moraeru no ka to*

January 1<sup>st</sup> TEM TOP, o-toshidama TOP when receive NOM QUEST  
QUOT

*kubi wo nagaku shite matte ita mono desu.*  
neck OBJ long make waited ASSERTIVE

“On January 1, we waited longingly for when we would receive our *o-toshidama*, the small envelopes with money from our relatives.”

Several strategies may be used by a translator to translate a word that has no immediate equivalent in the target language. One is to **use a less specific word**, for instance:

17. 味噌汁 *misoshiru* “soup” (disregarding the ingredient of *miso*)

Since *misoshiru* has become rather well-known outside Japan with the spread of Japanese restaurants, another option is simply to **keep the Japanese word as a loanword** in the target language and translate *misoshiru* as “miso-soup”. The loanword strategy

works well for the most common imported Japanese words, such as other foods, *tempura* and *sushi*, and various phenomena like *ikebana*, *juudō* and *karate*.

Other words that have no equivalent in the target language may be harder to deal with. Replacing it by a more general word will remove some of the flavour from the original text, and using a loanword is not an option if the word is not already well known in the target language culture. Using a loanword may be chosen as a strategy if it is accompanied by an *explanation* or *explication*. The disadvantage of this is the heaviness it adds to the style, so some kind of *paraphrasing* is preferable, as for instance in this small quote from the famous British anthropologist Ronald Dore's essay on his first year in Japan. Dore is talking about his landlady's ability to interpret what goes on in the part of Tokyo where they live. He uses several words (underlined) that do not have immediate equivalent translations in English:

18. 井戸端会議の名人で、人の家庭の内幕をよく知っているというばかりではない。その批判も解釈も要領を得ていて、建て前の裏にある本音を見抜くのが上手であった。

*Idobatakaigi* no *meijin* de, *hito* no *katei* no *uchimaku* wo *yoku* *shitteiru* to *iu* *bakari* de *ha* *nai*. *Sono* *hihan* mo *kaishaku* mo *yōryō* wo *ete* *ite*, *tatemae* no *ura* *ni* *aru* *hone* wo *minuku* no *ga* *jōzu* de *atta*.

Below, we give one possible translation:

18a. "She was the undisputed champion of street gossip, and she did not only know what was going on behind the neighbours' closed doors. She always hit the nail on the head in her critiques and interpretations, and she was very good at reading the real goings-on behind the façade."

The underlined words are:

*Ido-bata-kaigi* (well-side-meeting; a meeting [of women fetching water] [held] by the side of the [village] well). Even though there are no central village wells in Japan anymore, the expression has remained to designate neighbourhood gossip. The woman in the above excerpt is living in a ward in Tokyo shortly

after World War II, where houses were built side by side with narrow alleys in between. For this reason, “street gossip” could be appropriate.

*Mei-jin* (name-person) means a well-known master of something. Gossip is not usually included among the things one can be a *meijin* of, so the use of the word here is slightly ironic. By translating it with the sports expression “champion”, a similar effect is created in the target language.

*Uchi-maku* (inner-curtain) is actually a stage expression, but is probably better rendered by the English expression “behind closed doors”.

*Yōryō wo ete* means to “understand/get to the gist of a matter”, and in this context it expresses that the woman’s opinions and explanations of her neighbours’ behaviour are “spot on”. By using an English idiom (“hit the nail on the head”), we try to convey the original meaning with a somewhat more colloquial expression. The style of the text as a whole is colloquial, and there are times when a colloquialism in Japanese has to be translated by a less expressive term in English, so, partly to make up for that, a colloquialism is used here even though the Japanese phrase is not marked so heavily.

The last two words, *tate-mae* (raise-in front) and *hon-ne* (original-tone), are a frequently used pair in Japanese, and in some books the words are considered unique features of Japanese culture. The concept the two words convey is, however, far from unique. Most (if not all) cultures distinguish between a “public face” and “private behaviour” – the way you behave when you are at work or at formal gatherings, and the way you behave with your intimate family. This word pair has been translated (or explained) frequently by anthropologists, but although many specialists prefer to use *honne* and *tatemae* as loanwords in English, they are not sufficiently well known among ordinary readers to use in the above translation. Hence we suggest “real goings-on” and “façade”.

There are only two possible options left if you cannot find a less specific word, use the word as a loanword, find room for an explanation or a footnote, or think of a way of paraphrasing the

Japanese word. One is to add an illustration (if the task permits and the word lends itself to illustration), and the other is to omit it. The famous Danish translator Mogens Boysen is reported to have said, “Nothing is so difficult that you cannot omit it!” While not a very commendable strategy, it is often possible to omit a word – or even a phrase here and there – if including it will make the finished translation unnatural or inappropriate.

In this chapter, small units from semes and up to fixed expressions have been presented. The next chapter will deal with longer strings of words within sentences, such as syntactic phrases, collocations, idioms, metaphors, proverbs, and sayings.



## CHAPTER 5

# Micro-units II: Phrases

## 5.1 Syntactic phrases

One level up from the unit of the single or compound word, we reach a unit of translation generated by the syntactic arrangement into **phrases**. A phrase is a group of words that functions as a simple unit in the syntax of a sentence, for instance as a grammatical subject, object, etc. Although a single word may in itself form a syntactic phrase, most syntactic phrases consist of several words, for example nominal phrases (NPs):

1. かわいい女の子が *kawaii onna no ko ga* “the cute girl (as the subject of a sentence)”
2. 書き終えた原稿を *kakioeta genkō wo* “the completed manuscript (as the object of a sentence)”

The syntactic arrangement proper for a language indicates which relations to establish between the components, so as to indicate some part of it as the **head**, and other parts as **modifier(s)**. In example 1, *onna no ko ga* is the head, and *kawaii* the modifier. In example 2, *genkō wo* is the head, and *kakioeta* is the modifier. Syntactic phrases can also be organised around a verbal head in verbal phrases (VPs), such as

3. 名前を忘れた *namae wo wasureta* “I forgot his name”

in which *wasureta* is the head (I forgot something), and *namae wo* (“that something” was his name) is the modifier. VPs in Japanese can also be formed by an adjective, and the adjective alone in Japanese means “be [adjective]” in English. A verb phrase can thus be organised around an adjective, as in

4. 女の子がかわいい *onna no ko ga kawaii* “the girl is cute”

where *kawaii* is the head ([someone] is cute), and *onna no ko ga* (the girl is “that someone”) is the modifier.

Syntactic combinations of words appear as constituents in the syntactic organisation of clauses and sentences, where they receive different **grammatical roles** or relations, such as Main Verb, Subject, Object, Adverbial Phrase, etc. Delimiting and defining the syntactic phrases in a sentence is the indispensable first step towards interpreting the sentence correctly, and, second, in translating it properly.

A syntactic phrase in one language may have to be translated as a single word in another language, and a syntactic phrase which consists of only one word in the source language may have to be turned into a syntactic phrase of several words in the target language (example 5). Also, the order in which the words appear will often have to be changed (example 6):

5. 忘年会 *bōnenkai* (forget-year-meeting)  
A New Year's party
6. 三菱商事の社員は  
*Mitsubishi shōji* no sha-in ha  
The Mitsubishi Corporation ATTR employees TOP  
“The employees of the Mitsubishi Corporation”

One complication in defining the syntactic phrases of Japanese sentences is that they tend to appear on several levels. A sentence will consist of a number of syntactic phrases, some of which may be called **complex syntactic phrases**. They are complex in structure but, nevertheless, form single units in relation to the main predicate of the sentence. Complex syntactic phrases consist of several

**simple syntactic phrases**, which relate to the verb phrase contained within the complex syntactic phrase. To show in detail how this may work, we shall go through the rather long but thorough analysis of just one complicated Japanese sentence. It will illustrate how complex and simple syntactic phrases work together.

6a(1) 何か、あるむずかしいことを理解するために、昔から取られてきた方法は、  
それを ほかのものっとやさしいことにたとえるという方法です。

[*Nanika aru muzukashii koto wo rikai suru tame ni*  
 [Something a certain difficult thing OBJ understand in order to]  
 [*mukashi kara toraretekita hōhō ha*  
 [old days from has been taken method TOP]  
 [*sore wo*  
 [that OBJ]  
 [*hōhō no motto yasashii koto ni tatoeru to iu hōhō*  
 [other ATTR more easy thing COMP compare ATTR method]  
 [*desu*.  
 [is]

This sentence consists of three complex syntactic phrases and two simple syntactic phrases:

6b. Complex syntactic phrase 1: *Nanika aru muzukashii koto wo rikai suru tame ni*

Complex syntactic phrase 2: *mukashi kara toraretekita hōhōwa*

Simple syntactic phrase 1: *sore wo*

Complex syntactic phrase 3: *hōhō no motto yasashii koto ni tatoeru to iu hōhō*

Simple syntactic phrase 2: *desu*

Below, they will be explained one by one:

6c(1) (CSP 1) *Nanika aru muzukashii koto wo rikai suru tame ni*

The word *-tame ni* ("in order to") marks the end/border of this complex syntactic phrase. *Tame ni* signals that what precedes it is a sentence which is subordinate to the main predicate. Let

us pause briefly to look at the second-order, simple syntactic phrases that make up this subordinate sentence:

Simple syntactic phrase 1.1: *Nanika aru muzukashii koto wo*

Simple syntactic phrase 1.2: *rikai suru*

Simple syntactic phrase 1.3: *tame ni*

In Japanese, it is often very easy to define the grammatical role of a syntactic unit because it is clearly marked by the type of postposition which follows it. In this case, the postposition *wo* immediately tells us that the syntactic phrase *nanika aru muzukashii koto wo* (“some certain difficult thing”) is the object of the following verb, *rikai suru* (“understand”). *Tame ni* serves to connect the preceding subordinate sentence to the main predicate. We can translate this syntactic phrase in isolation as

6c(2) “In order to understand something difficult (a certain difficult thing)”

The second complex syntactic phrase is:

6d(1) (CSP 2) *Mukashi kara toraretekita hōhō ha*

This whole syntactic phrase is marked by the postposition *ha*, which, in this case, is the TOP marker. The TOP marker tells us that the preceding syntactic phrase(s) is/are the TOP of what the main predicate tells us. Again, let us digress to look at the second-order, simple syntactic phrases inside the larger TOP-aliased syntactic phrase:

Simple syntactic phrase 2.1: *Mukashi kara*

Simple syntactic phrase 2.2: *toraretekita hōhō ha*

The **mental space builder** *mukashi kara* (“since old times”) marks a time frame for what follows, and since the postposition *kara* (“from”) marks only the start of the time frame and is not followed by a marker for “until”, it must be presumed to be still

ongoing. Thus, the meaning is “ever since the old days [and up to and including now]” = “always”. This meaning is further reinforced by the auxiliary *-kita* (“came”, i.e. it denotes movement from the past to the present) added to the following verb. The simple syntactic phrase *toraretekita hōhō ha* (“a method that has been used/chosen up to now”) consists of (1) a verb phrase composed of two verbs, *toru* (“take”) in the passive form, *torare[te]*, followed by *kuru* (“come”) in the past tense, and (2) a noun, *hōhō*, marked by the TOP marker *wa*, and preceded by a verb phrase in a modifying position.

By itself, this syntactic phrase translates as “a method which we have always used”. We may try to combine it with the preceding syntactic phrase, in which case we get:

6d(2) “A method we have always used to understand something difficult”

The third syntactic phrase is a simple one:

6e. (SSP 1) *Sore wo*

*Sore* is a deictic word which points back to something known, something that the reader has already been told. Since it is marked by the object marker *wo* it is reasonable to assume that the known thing it points back to is the object in the first syntactic phrase, *nanika aru muzukashii koto wo*. We can therefore translate it as “that [= the difficult thing]”.

The fourth syntactic phrase is again a complex one:

6f(1) (CSP 3) *hōka no motto yasashii koto ni tatoeru to iu hōhō*

Let us look at the simple syntactic phrases making up this complex syntactic phrase. The two modifying phrases, *hōka no*, “another” (a noun followed by the attributive postposition), and *motto yasashii*, “more easy”, an adverb modifying an adjective), both modify *koto*, “thing”. *Koto* itself is followed by the postposition *ni*, which, in this case, denotes the first part of a comparison.

The next simple syntactic phrase is *tatoeru to iu hōhō*, which consists of the verb *tatoeru*, “to compare by example” or “to make an analogy”. *Tatoeru* is made into a modifying verb by the interpolation of the attributive marker *to iu*, and it modifies the noun *hōhō*, “method”. We can translate this complex syntactic phrase as

6f(2) “the method of comparing (it) to another, easier thing”

The last syntactic phrase is simply the copula, *desu* (“is”). Copula sentences basically consist of a TOP, a noun phrase, and *desu* (or an inflected form of *desu*):

(X は) Y です

(TOP) NP COPULA

The TOP(IC) may be missing in a copula sentence, but the NP can never be left out.

The TOP in the above sentence was basically the word *hōhō*, “method”, with a very long modifying string of words in front of it: *Nanika aru muzukashii koto wo rikai suru tame ni mukashi kara toraretekita hōhō ha*, “A method we have always used to understand something difficult”. The noun preceding the copula was *sore wo hoka no motto yasashii koto ni tatoeru to iu hōhō*, “the method of comparing it to another, easier thing”. In English this would produce a sentence such as:

6a(2) “A method we have always used to understand something difficult (TOP) is (COPULA) the method of comparing it to something easier (NP)”

The English sentence above is an almost literal translation which must, of course, be revised into a more elegant and less **marked** sentence during the revision phase, such as for instance:

6a(3) “To understand something difficult we have always used the method of trying to compare it to something easier”

Separating the syntactic phrases correctly and determining whether they are related directly to the main predicate or whether they are parts of a larger, complex syntactic phrase is extremely important in order to reach a correct translation. Getting the analysis of the syntactic phrases wrong is a sure guarantee of getting the translation fatally wrong as well.

## 5.2 Fixed expressions

Some phrases have fossilised into **fixed phrases** which comprise a number of words.

These can be **collocations** – words that are habitually used together, such as *kaigi wo hiraku*, “to arrange a meeting”; *inochi wo kakeru*, “put one’s life at risk” – or in English, “provoke a fight”, “raise an issue”.

They can also be **idioms** – fixed expressions particular to a specific language, such as *ki ni shinai*, “I don’t care”; *te ga denai*, “I cannot afford it”; or in English, “helter-skelter”, “shocked to the core”.

Furthermore, they can be **metonyms** – the naming of something by something else, a geographical location such as *Tōkyō*, for example, used to denote the Japanese government; *Kabukichō* to denote the Finance Ministry; or in English, “The White House” for the US president; “Downing Street” or “Number 10” for the British prime minister.

Still another category is **metaphors** – the use of an image to explain something else, *neko no te mo karitai hodo isogashii*, “I am so busy I want to borrow even the cat’s paws”; *hakoiri-musume*, “an overprotected daughter (kept in a box)”; or in English, “spread like wildfire”; “an arsenal of treatment options”.

Finally there are **proverbs** such as *uma no mimi ni nenbutsu*, “to say prayers into a horse’s ear”, denoting a futile effort; *tsukiya ni chōchin*, “a lantern in moonlight”, denoting something super-

fluous; or in English, “there is no smoke without fire” to denote that one thinks a rumour might not be totally untrue; or “carry coal to Newcastle” to indicate a futile and superfluous action.

All these types of **fixed expressions** will be explained and illustrated in the following.

### 5.2.1 Collocations

Collocation is the term used for an expression in which two words habitually appear together. For the translator, it is important not to translate such words separately, but to think of them as a pair that may have to be replaced by a different pair (in which one or both of the words are not literal translations of the source language) or by a single word in the target language. Some words collocate easily with a large number of words, while others appear only in strictly limited contexts. When translating collocations it is important to keep in mind that words must be **compatible**; they cannot just be combined in any old way. Mona Baker (1992, 48) shows very clearly in a table how synonyms, such as “flawless”, “unblemished”, “immaculate”, etc., cannot be freely combined with nouns such as “complexion”, “kitchen”, “reputation”, etc., without sounding unnatural.

#### *Noun-verb collocations:*

Some nouns are habitually followed by a specific verb (or, as in English, following a specific verb as object) to express a fixed meaning. This does not mean that other verbs are not possible, but only that a specific verb will usually be chosen. If a different verb is chosen, it will be because the author wants to make a point, and we call this a **marked** use. In other words, when the habitual combination is used, the phrase is **unmarked**, but when a different verb is used, the phrase becomes **marked**. It is important for the translator not to turn an unmarked phrase in the source language into a marked phrase in the target language or *vice versa*, and therefore a literal translation should be avoided in favour of finding the similarly (un)marked phrase in the target language.

In some cases, a literal translation will simply be wrong. For instance,

7. 会議を開く *kaigi wo hiraku* (meeting-OBJ-open) means “arrange a meeting” and not the literal translation, “open a meeting”. The latter would be 開会の挨拶をする *kaikai no aisatsu wo suru* (open meeting-ATTR-greeting-OBJ-do), and this expression could accurately be rendered as “open the meeting” in English.

In other cases, a literal translation will serve to unduly mark the expression in the target language. For instance:

8. 日が昇る時も、沈む時も、海がとてもきれいです。

*Hi ga noboru toki mo, shizumu toki mo, umi ga totemo kirei desu*

Sun SUBJ climb time too, sink time too, sea SUBJ very is beautiful

“The sea is very beautiful both when the sun rises and when it sets.”

*Noboru* and *shizumu*, like “rise” and “set”, are the verbs habitually used about the sun’s movements. It is possible to use other meanings of *noboru* and *shizumu*, such as “climb” and “sink”, but to use these words about the sun in an English translation would mark the phrases as out of the ordinary - something which was not intended in the source text.

Other examples of noun-verb combinations that cannot be translated literally word by word are:

9. いい考えが浮かんだ

*Ii kangae ga ukanda* (good-thought-SUBJ-floated [to the surface])

“I got a great idea”

10. 一生懸命がんばった

*Isshokenmei ganbatta* (with all one’s might/did one’s best)

“S/he did his/her very best”

11. お湯を沸かしてください

*O-yu wo wakashite kudasai* (hot water-OBJ-boil [water]-please)

“Please put the kettle on” or “Please boil some water”

## 12. 荷物をあづけた

*Nimotsu wo azuketa* (luggage-OBJ-put in care)  
“I have checked in my luggage”

## 13. 歯を磨きなさい

*Ha wo migakinasai* (teeth-OBJ-polish)  
“Brush your teeth!”

## 14. 言葉につまる

*Kotoba ni tsumaru* (words-in-get stuck)  
“S/he is speechless” or “S/he is at a loss for words”

## 15. 電報を打った

*Denpō wo utta* (telegram-OBJ-beat)  
“S/he sent a telegram”

## 16. 会議をお開きにする

*kaigi wo ohiraki ni suru* (meeting-PREF-open/dissolve-INDIR OBJ-do)  
“End a meeting”

17. 話の腰を折る *hanashi no koshi wo oru* (talk/story-ATTR-hip-OBJ-break)  
“Interrupt someone”18. 勉強に腰を入れる *benkyō ni koshi wo ireru* (studies-LOC-hip-OBJ-put in)  
“Set to study in earnest”

*Adjective-noun collocations:*

Similar attention should be paid to the relative unmarkedness of some adjective-noun combinations, so that the translator does not inadvertently mark the phrase in a translation. For instance, 美しい女性 *utsukushii josei* (beautiful-woman) is a common way of expressing that a girl or woman is good-looking. The translator should not be too creative and say, for instance, “a stunning woman”, as that would constitute an unnecessary marking of the phrase.

Other examples of habitual adjective-noun phrases are:

19. 澄んだ瞳 *sunda hitomi* (clear/transparent-eye)  
“bright eyes”

20. 掛け替えのない命 *kakegae no nai inochi* (hang-do over again-SUBJ-not exist-life)  
“precious life/lives”

21. 利口な犬 *rikō na inu* (intelligent-dog)  
“a clever dog”

22. かわいい子 *kawaii ko* (cute-child)  
“a cute kid/child/girl”

23. まじめな若者 *majime na wakamono* (serious-youngster)  
“a serious young man”

24. 恐ろしい話 *osoroshii hanashi* (terrible-talk)  
“(a) frightening (story)”

Some words have a very large **collocational range**, such as for instance the verb *kakeru*. The basic meaning of *kakeru* is to hang up (transitive), but its specific meaning is determined by the word with which it forms a collocation. For example:

25. 壁にかける *Kabe ni e wo kakeru* (wall-LOC-picture-OBJ-hang)  
“(S/he) hangs a picture on the wall”

26. 電話をかける *Denwa wo kakeru* (phone-OBJ-hang)  
“S/he makes a call”

27. コショウをかける *Koshō wo kakeru* (pepper-OBJ-hang)  
“S/he sprinkles pepper on [his/her food]”

28. 命をかける *Inochi wo kakeru* (life-OBJ-hang)  
“S/he risked his/her life” or “S/he put his/her life at stake”

The context in which the collocation appears may be a **close context** within a single phrase (for *kakeru* “hang”, we only need to look at *denwa*, “telephone”, to discern its meaning in this particular context), or it may be a **wider context** as in the following example:

29. この画家は、生前すばらしい作品を数多く残しています。この美術館では、彼の遺作のうち十点が、一般に公開されています。入り口に入ったところの正面に掛けられているのも、その一つです。

*Kono gaka ha, seizen subarashii sakuhin wo kazuooku noko-shiteimasu.*

This painter TOP before his death wonderful works OBJ numerous left behind

*Kono bijutsukan de ha, kare no isaku no uchi jutten ga,*

This museum LOC TOP he POSS works left after one's death ATTR among ten SUBJ

*ippān ni kōkai sarete imasu. Iriguchi wo haitta tokoro no*

generally exhibited to the public are being. Entrance OBJ enter place ATTR

*shōmen ni kakerarete iru no mo, sono hitotsu desu.*

front LOC is hanging NOM INCL of-that one is

“This painter left many wonderful works for posterity. Ten of these works are exhibited to the public in this museum. The one that hangs right in front of you when you enter the museum is also one of those.”

In this example, *sakuhin* (work=painting) in the first sentence is the context from which the meaning of *kakete* in the third sentence must be derived.

It may easily happen that the translator becomes so engrossed in the source language that collocations in the source language begin to seem quite natural – even so natural that they can be directly transferred into the target language. This happens more easily when working with two languages that are closer to each other than Japanese and English, but it may still happen in translating from Japanese into a European language. To illustrate the kind of **transfer** that might happen, we may take the somewhat unlikely example of the way in which teeth are cleaned. *Ha o migaita* would then be translated as “I polished my teeth”.

A similar danger lies in translating an unmarked collocation in the source language into a marked one in the target language. The word *rikō na* can mean clever, intelligent, smart (mentally),

etc. *Rikō na inu* is an unmarked collocation used when talking about a trained dog. The corresponding unmarked collocation in English is “a clever dog”, and by translating it as “an intelligent dog” or “a smart dog”, the expression becomes more marked than it was in the source language.

In some professional fields, such as for instance the cutting edge world of smart technologies, new collocations specific to a certain field develop rapidly. A translator working in these fields must acquire extensive knowledge of equivalent common collocations in both the source language and the target language in order to create natural-sounding and understandable translations. Here are some examples:

30. パソコンが凍る *pasokon ga kooru* (computer-SUBJ-freeze)

“The screen is frozen”

31. パソコンが落ちる *pasokon ga ochiru* (computer-SUBJ-fall)

“The computer is down”

32. 鯖を立てる *saba wo tateru* (saba/server-OBJ-stand)

“Setting up a server” (Literally, *saba* is a mackerel fish. Being close in sound to the (Japanised) English word, it has come to be used for “server”)

33. 串を刺す *kushi wo sasu* (skewer-OBJ-pierce)

“Sending via proxy server” (*kushi* is computer jargon which refers to a proxy server)

Some collocations form idiomatic expressions, and the translator must beware of this in order to avoid translating the literal meaning of the collocation instead of the meaning of the idiom. The example mentioned earlier, *kaigi wo hiraku*, “arrange a meeting”, is a good example of this particular trap for translators.

There will always be a conflict in the translator’s mind about whether to aim for accuracy or for that which sounds more natural in the target language. Choosing a translation that sounds natural in the target language often means choosing a translation that is less accurate. The choice to be made in such situations

would depend on the type of text being translated and the expectations of the target readers.

A number of collocations are specific to Japanese culture (or rather to Chinese culture from which they are often imported). Thus the many collocations with the cultureme 気 *ki* (in Chinese *qi*, as for instance in *qi gong*). The meaning of *ki* is connected to the Chinese concept of the universe and the human body, where *ki* is a kind of universal energy, which should preferably stay healthy and strong to keep a body well, both physically and mentally. *Ki* as an expression for the concept of energy-flows in the body can be influenced by acupuncture or acupressure, and illness and bad temper have traditionally been explained as blockages of a person's *ki*. Expressions that contain *ki* cannot be translated literally, nor will the presence of the word always give a clue to the meaning of any specific collocation. A dictionary may be of some help in these cases. The examples below illustrate just a small range of the many uses of *ki*:

34. マキちゃんが気にすることないのよ。

*Maki-chan ga ki ni suru koto nai no yo.*

Maki TIT SUBJ worry NOM not be FIN

“That's nothing for you to worry about, Maki.”

35. 気をつけてください。

*Ki wo tsukete kudasai.*

Be careful please

“Please take care.”

36. そんなに気を使わなくともいいんですよ。

*Sonna ni ki wo tsukawanakutemo ii n desu yo.*

So much be-polite-not-even-though fine ASSERT FIN

“You don't have to be so polite.”

37. あの人 気にいったんです。

Ano hito      ki ni itta      *n desu.*

That person have come to appreciate ASSERTIVE

“I like him.”

Sometimes a collocation may be deliberately marked or unusual in the source language, and the translator will have to think of how to make them similarly marked in the target language instead of just choosing an unmarked collocation:

38a. アイスクリームが好きです。

Aisukuriimu ga suki desu

Ice cream    SUBJ like

“I like ice cream.”

38b. アイスクリームが大好きです。

Aisukuriimu ga daisuki desu

Ice cream    SUBJ big-like

“I love ice cream.”

## 5.2.2 Idioms

Idioms are fixed expressions that do not have any immediate equivalent or similar expression in the target language. An idiom is also characterised by the fact that its meaning cannot be deducted from the meaning of each of its parts. Some idioms are derived from cultural beliefs and worldviews, others have developed more or less by coincidence, and others again may be fossilised metaphors.

A few grammatical constructions may be considered as idioms in the practical sense that they need to be translated as a full phrase and not in terms of their constituent parts. For instance the ending *-nakereba naranai* (or *-nakuteha ikenai*) literally means “if not, then will not do”, but it should be translated as “must” or “has to”.

## 39. 薬をのまなければならぬ

*Kusuri wo nomanakereba naranai.*

Medicine OBJ drink if not (be) will not be(come)

“I/you have to take your medicine”

In most cases, however, idioms are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or phrases.

As mentioned earlier, Japanese has many expressions which involve the concept of *ki*, which may sometimes be translated as “air”, “steam”, “energy”, etc. Both Chinese and Japanese have a large amount of expressions in which the cultureme *ki* is a central component. These expressions cannot be understood simply with an understanding of the concept of *ki*, but need to be learned as fixed expressions or idioms. *Ki* may appear with words from different word classes, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. It may also form part of a compound word or of a phrase (as shown above).

Examples of compound words with *ki* are:

40a.	気管	<i>kikan</i> ,	“the trachea”
40b.	気鋭	<i>kiei</i> ,	“spiritedness”
40c.	気どる	<i>kidoru</i> ,	“put on airs”
40d.	気落ち	<i>kiochi</i> ,	“disappointed”
40e.	気後れ	<i>kiokure</i> ,	“lose confidence”
40f.	気難しい	<i>kimuzukashii</i> ,	“has a difficult character”

Another idiom with a religious background is the cultureme, or “**religioreme**”, *en*, which means “connection”, in the sense implied in the Buddhist belief in karma, where people can be connected in this life because of connections in an earlier life. For instance:

41. 何か縁があつたんでしょう。

*Nanika      en      ga      attan deshō.*

Something connection SUBJ had TENT

“There must have been some kind of special (karmic) connection.”

Below follows a list of examples of common idioms with explanations. For the translator it is necessary to find a similar idiom in the target language, and if that is not possible, the simple meaning of the idiom can often be used as the translation.

*Nouns:*

42. 箱入り娘 *Hakoirimusume* (box-put in-daughter/young girl) - “an over-protected daughter”

43. お上りさん *O-nobori-san* (PREF-go up (to the capital)-TIT) - “a country bumpkin”

44. 八方美人 *Happō bijin* (eight sides-beauty) - “a person who tries to please everyone”

(to look beautiful in eight directions)

45. 窓際族 *Madogiwazoku* (window-sill-tribe) - “deadwood” (the unproductive white-collar workers who are relegated to desks near the window and left to their own devices)

46. 水商売 *Mizu shōbai* (water-trade) - “entertainment and prostitution trade” (*mizu* refers to the impermanence of the beauty and youth generally required of women who work in these fields)

47. 向こう三軒両隣 *Mukō sangen ryōdonari* (across-on both sides) -

“(good) neighbourly relations” (which must be maintained by giving presents to those who live on both sides and directly across the road from oneself)

48. 朝飯前 *asameshima* (before breakfast)

“It's a piece of cake” (meaning “very easy”)

*Verbs:*

49. 笑い出す *waraidasu* (laugh-push out) - “burst into laughter”
50. 話しかける *hanashikakeru* (talk-hang) - “open a conversation (with someone)”
51. 思い出す *omoidasu* (think-push out) - “recall”
52. 行きつまる *ikitsumaru* (go-get stuck) - “cannot go on”, “get stuck”
53. 間に合った *maniatta* (interval-LOC-met) - “made it in time”
54. 油を売る *abura wo uru* (oil-OBJ-sell) - “Idle one's time away/dawdle”

*Adjectives:*

55. こぎれいな家 *ko-gireina-ie* (small-pretty-house) - “a tidy little house”
56. こざっぱりした服装 *kozappari shita fukusō* (small-clean/orderly-clothes) - “a neat dress”
57. こぎたない男 *kogitanai otoko* (small-dirty-man) - “a grungy person”
58. するがしこい人 *zurugashikoi hito* (sneaky-intelligent person) - “a fox”
59. ごぎれいな方 *kogirei na kata* (small-pretty-person) - “a neat person”

*Adverbs:*

Japanese has a very large group of **onomatopoeia** which may appear as different parts of speech, but which are most frequently used as adverbs. They rarely have precise equivalents in English, since English has much fewer onomatopoetic adverbs. Instead they may have to be rendered into English as verbs or even whole clauses.

The Japanese onomatopoeia not only imitate or describe sounds, but also texture, feeling, mode, and appearance. There are several dictionaries of Japanese onomatopoeia on the market (*Jazz Up Your Japanese With Onomatopoeia* (Fukuda & Gally 2003) and *Nihongo pera pera!: a user's guide to Japanese onomatopoeia*

(Millington 1993)), and the Internet also has resources that may be used to find the meaning of a specific term.<sup>3</sup>

Below are a few examples:

60. くすぐす笑う *kusukusu warau* - “giggles” (laughs *kusukusu*)
61. ゲラゲラ笑う *geragera warau* - “laughs loudly (in an impudent way)”
62. ちかちかしている *chikachika shite iru* - “flickers” (does *chikachika*)
63. ギリギリ間に合った *girigiri maniatta* - “made it just in time”
64. ぺらぺらしゃべる *perapera shaberu* - “speaks fluently/prattles” (speaks *perapera*)
65. ピリッとしている *piritto shite iru* - “is very spicy” (does *pirit* in your mouth)
66. きらきら光る *kirakira hikaru* - “shine brightly”
67. ぐつぐつ煮る *gutsugutsu niru* - “simmer” (cook *gutsugutsu*)

The final category of examples contains idioms that are phrases.

*Phrases:*

68. 腹が立った *hara ga tatta* (stomach-SUBJ-stood up)  
“got angry”
69. 頭にきている *atama ni kite iru* (head-to-is coming)  
“is annoyed”
70. 肝をつぶす *kimo wo tsubusu* (liver-OBJ-crush)  
“loses one's courage”
71. 腕を磨く *ude wo migaku* (arm-OBJ-polish)  
“trains one's skill”

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3 <http://web.mit.edu/anime/www/onomatopoeia.html>; <http://www.oop-ack.com/manga/soundfx.html>; <http://www.coolslang.com/in/Japan/PeraPera.php>. All accessed July 2007.

72. それは耳が痛いんです *sore ha mimi ga itai n desu* (that-TOP-ears-SUBJ-hurt-FIN)  
“That is a painful truth”

73. あの人は顔が広い *Ano hito ha kao ga hiroi* (that-person-TOP-face-SUBJ-is broad)  
“He is an influential person”

74. 瓜二つ *uri futatsu* (watermelon-two)  
“[resemble each other] like two peas in a pod”

Idioms are often listed in dictionaries, and a translator faced with an unknown idiom can therefore find some help there. There are also a number of Internet sites listing Japanese idioms (a Google search using the phrase “Japanese idioms” will yield a large number of results). New idioms are formed constantly, often in the media and in advertising, so regular reading of newspapers and magazines in both the source language and the target language is an invaluable resource for any translator.

### 5.2.3 Metaphors

A **metaphor** is an expression that carries the meaning of one thing into the description of something else. In a way, metaphors can be said to violate our semantic common sense in order to convey a certain idea or to give a vivid description of something. For instance, the expression “the walls have ears” may be used to describe the fact that someone may be listening in on your conversation without your knowledge. Metaphors require the listener to use his or her imagination to “translate” the metaphor into something known that makes sense.

Metaphors are everywhere. They can be found in all genres and styles, in texts for specific purposes as well as for general purposes, and in both written and spoken texts. When George Lakoff and Mark Johnson titled their book on metaphors *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), they were making an important point. Metaphors abound because we constantly create new con-

cepts and meanings through *analogy*, for instance by transferring words and expressions from one cognitive area to another – either from one area within the physical world to another – as in “he put up a lion’s fight” – or from the physical world to the world of abstract thought as in “she was struck by the coincidence”. Examples from Japanese include expressions such as 耳が痛い *mimi ga itai* (ears-SUBJ-painful) about listening to painful truths, 念を押す *nen wo osu* (thoughts-OBJ-press) for “emphasise”, or 手を濡らさない *te wo nurasanai* (hand-OBJ-not wet) for “without effort”.

Thus, metaphors can be said to structure our thoughts. For instance, as pointed out by Lakoff and Johnson, “argument” is talked about in terms of “war” as “opponents” “attack” and “defend” their positions, use an “arsenal” of arguments, and both try to “win” by “shooting down” the other’s arguments.

Metaphors may be one of the most intricate problems the translator will encounter. Especially in literary language, but also in the advertising world, metaphors can be very original and spin a web of different nuances as well as layers of meanings, all of which may be essential for a full interpretation of the original work. Especially in literary and poetic texts, metaphors, because they have never been used before, can be highly *original* and creative. Other metaphors have become part of our daily language and these are said to be *lexicalised*. Still others have become such an integral part of our vocabulary that they are no longer thought of as metaphors but have taken on the characteristics of idioms. These are called *fossilised metaphors*.

Original metaphors may be said to be alive, and since they are new in the source language, they can sometimes be translated literally into the target language. Unfortunately, this does not work in all cases, because metaphors often have a certain phonetic elegance that does not transfer well in a literal translation. Also, the analogy employed may be culturally determined and thus not immediately understandable to the target reader. The following poem by Tanigawa Shuntarō (b. 1931) is built over a single metaphor, which is central to the understanding of the poem.

The metaphor of a relay race is used to describe the way the sun shines in different places on the earth at different times:

75.

朝のリレー

カムチャツカの若者が  
きりんの夢を見ているとき  
メキシコの娘は  
朝もやの中でバスを待っている  
ニューヨークの少女が  
ほほえみながら寝返りをうつとき  
ローマの少年は  
柱頭を染める朝陽にウインクする  
この地球では  
いつもどこかで朝がはじまっている  
ぼくらは朝をリレーするのだ  
経度から経度へと  
そうしていわば交替で地球を守る  
眠る前のひととき耳をすますと  
どこか遠くで  
目覚まし時計のベルが鳴ってる  
それはあなたの送った朝を  
誰かがしっかりと受けとめた証拠なのだ

Asa no riree

Kamuchatsuka no wakamono ga  
kirin no yume wo mite iru toki  
Mekishiko no musume ha  
asamoya no naka de basu wo matteiru  
Nyū Yōku no shōjo ga  
hohoeminagara negaeri wo utsu toki  
Rōma no shōnen ha  
chūtō wo someru asahi ni uinku wo suru  
Kono chikyū de ha  
Itsumo dokoka de asa ga hajimatte iru  
Bokura ha asa wo riree suru no da  
keido kara keido he to  
sōshite iwaba kōkan de chikyū wo mamoru  
Neru mae no hitotoki mimi wo sumas to  
dokoka tōku de  
mezamashidokei no beru ga natteiru  
Sore ha anata no okutta asa wo  
Dareka ga shikkari to uketometa shōko na no da

Relying the morning

While a young man in Kamchatka  
Is dreaming of giraffes  
A young woman in Mexico  
Is waiting in the morning mist for her bus  
While a girl in New York  
Turns smiling in her sleep  
A young boy in Rome  
Winks at red-tinted chapters in the morning sun  
On this earth  
Morning is always starting somewhere.  
We pass the morning on to each other,  
From longitude to longitude  
And take turns in protecting the Earth  
Listen carefully a moment before you sleep  
Somewhere far away  
An alarm clock will be ringing.  
This is the proof that somewhere  
Someone has grabbed firmly hold of  
The morning you sent.

(Translated by Refsing)

The poem starts by contrasting night and day through examples of young people's activities in different parts of the world. Since it is always morning somewhere on earth, the poet uses the metaphor of young people passing the morning on to each other like a token is passed on in a relay race. And just like the token should not be dropped during the race, we must be careful to protect our token (the earth) when its morning comes round to our hands. The poem finishes by imagining that when we go to sleep after doing our job of protecting the earth, we may hear faintly an alarm clock ringing somewhere else, so we know that other people are waking up and taking over.

For our example here, we have chosen a metaphor that is relatively simple and that may be transferred directly to the target language. More complicated metaphors require a great deal more contemplation by the translator in order to come up with a translation that is not only understandable to the target readers but also retains the freshness of the metaphor in the source language.

**Lexicalised metaphors** may be said to be half living, half dead. They are still recognised as metaphors but have been commonly accepted in the language and have lost most of their freshness in the process. They are called lexicalised because they have become full members of the linguistic repertoire available to all speakers. The following are a few examples of lexicalised metaphors:

76. 猫の手も借りたいほど忙しい。

Neko no te mo karitai hodo isogashii.

Cat ATTR paws even want to borrow degree is busy

“I am desperately busy.”

77. 神様に会ってから足を洗った。

Kamisama ni deatte kara ashi wo aratta.

God with meet after feet OBJ washed

“After he found religion, he gave up his criminal career.”

When metaphors are lexicalised, people occasionally mix two different contradictory metaphors into one by mistake. Mixing metaphors is generally considered comical and seen as an indicator of shortcomings in educational background, but it may also be done intentionally as a stylistic device to create a comical or poetic effect. A translator faced with, for instance, “Book’s Critique Ignites a Torrent of Criticism”, or “The negotiator played his card to the hilt”, will have a problem. The translator must try to find equivalents for both metaphors and then mix them, but this will rarely result in a meaningful expression in the target language! On the other hand, ignoring a mixed metaphor will almost certainly detract from the vividness of the text.

**Fossilised metaphors** may be said to be dead in the sense that they are used automatically and subconsciously without any native speakers giving thought to the fact that they are metaphorical in nature. Examples of fossilised metaphors are:

78. ごますり *gomasuri* (sesame seed-grinding) – “sucking up to someone in power” or “a toady”
79. 根回し *nemawashi* (root-binding) – “consensus seeking” (before a decision is made, consensus is assured by circulating a proposal to everyone concerned in order to get their stamp of approval)
80. 間引き *mabiki* (thinning out plants by pulling out some seedlings at regular intervals) – “abandoning/killing extra children in times of poverty and famine”

Since many metaphors have no equivalent in the target language, a direct translation is rarely a good choice. The translator’s choice of a local strategy for translating metaphors will depend on the global strategy: namely whether you have chosen to approach a faithful translation close to the source text or are aiming for a functional translation. For a faithful translation, the translator will try to preserve the original metaphor, whereas in a functional translation, the translator will choose an equivalent analogy or fixed phrase in the target language – or simply translate the meaning and disregard the analogy. The in-between strategy of

aiming for semantic equivalence will lead to choices similar to the functional approach; although in this case, the translator may spend more time trying to find an appropriate corresponding analogy rather than simply translating the meaning.

Basically, the translator has four different strategies to choose from in translating metaphors (Newmark 1985):

- 1) Use the same analogy. This would be the preferred choice when translating an original metaphor, but it will, of course, require that the same analogy makes sense in the target language and is easily picked up by the target readers.
- 2) Use an equivalent analogy to convey the same meaning with a different metaphor. This would be the most common strategy for lexicalised metaphors and it presupposes that an equivalent, lexicalised analogy exists in the target language.
- 3) Use the same analogy and add an explanation of its meaning. This strategy can be used for all three types of metaphors and is usually used when the translator wants to preserve the feeling of the source text, but cannot do so with a direct translation.
- 4) Dispense with the analogy and just translate the meaning carried by the metaphor in the specific context. This is the least satisfactory solution, but is, in fact, a quite common choice when the other options have been exhausted.

#### 5.2.4 Proverbs and sayings

Sayings are sentences or sentence fragments which contain a bit of common wisdom in an interesting, funny, or poetic way. They may be hidden quotations from well-known literature or parts of proverbs. In this sense they are similar to proverbs, but proverbs are more established and often more elaborate. A proverb may have a small story or anecdote with a punch line behind it. In this way, it can also be regarded as a hidden quotation. Sayings, on the other hand, usually stand alone. Both proverbs and sayings

express basic human wisdom, and they often have equivalents in several languages. However, the equivalent is generally in intent and not in literal meaning, because the literal meaning is often linked to specific geographical or personal names, the flora or fauna of a specific area, or to cultural or social organisation. Often, the mere mention of the initial word(s) of a proverb or saying is sufficient to activate the whole saying in the mind of a native speaker. A translator may not know the saying and will therefore need to trace the full saying in order to be able to find an adequate translation in the target language.

Below are listed a few examples of Japanese proverbs with their English equivalents:

81. 猫に小判 *Neko ni koban* (cat-INDIR OBJ-gold coin = giving golden coins to cats)  
“Throw pearls before swine”
82. 石の上にも三年 *Ishi no ue ni mo sannen* (Stone-ATTR-top-LOC-even-three years = if you spend three years on top of a stone, you will wear it down a bit):  
“Perseverance is rewarded”
83. 七転び八起き *Nanakorobi yaoki* (seven fall down-eight stand up - refers to the popular *Daruma* figure which is rounded and heavy at the bottom so that it is impossible to put it on its side - it will stand up again immediately when you let go of it. *Daruma* is the Japanese name for the Zen Buddhist monk whose legs wizened away when he spent a decade in meditation in front of a cliff wall. The dolls have become a symbol of persistence and of never giving up)  
“Try, try, and try again!” (this is just one possible translation and not quite accurate in that the translation is an encouragement, while the original proverb is descriptive. It is a quote from the words used by Winston Churchill about the fighter pilots in World War II)
84. 言わぬが花 *Iwanu ga hana* (saying nothing-ATTR-flower)  
“Silence is gold” (it is better not to say anything)

It can be difficult to draw the line between genuine proverbs and expressions that might be better characterised as sayings.

However, the following examples might more appropriately be called sayings:

85. 三つ子の魂百まで *Mitsugo no tamashii hyaku made* (three-year-old-child ATTR soul hundred until - the soul of a three-year-old lasts till a hundred)  
 “Early childhood education is essential to the development of the child” (this is an example of simply translating the meaning without using a corresponding saying in English)

86. 月夜にちょうちん *Tsukiyo ni chōchin* (moonlit night-added to-lantern = carrying a lantern when the darkness is lit up by the moon)  
 “Carry coal to Newcastle” (example of different expression, equivalent meaning)

87. 住めば都 *Sumeba miyako* (if one lives [there]-capital = if you live in a place it becomes the capital (centre) to you)  
 “Home is where the heart is” (somewhat different expression, roughly equivalent meaning)

88. 知らぬが仏 *Shiranu ga hotoke* (ignorant person-TOP-Buddha)  
 “Ignorance is bliss” (quite different expression, same meaning)

89. 猿も木から落ちる *Saru mo ki kara ochiru* (monkey-too-tree-from-fall down)  
 “Anyone can make a mistake”<sup>4</sup> (only the meaning is translated, the flavour of the Japanese is lost)

90. 出る釘は打たれる *Deru kugi ha utareru* (stick out-nail-TOP-be hit)  
 “The nail that protrudes will be beaten down” (often used to describe the assumed conformity of Japanese society). Again the translation is not a saying in English, but simply a translation of the meaning of the Japanese proverb

Both sayings and proverbs can be found in dictionaries if they are well known. The Internet, too, offers a large number of resources to help identify the meaning of a saying or a proverb (they are

<sup>4</sup> The same meaning is also expressed in the saying 弘法も筆の誤り, “Even Kōbō Daishi could make mistakes in his calligraphy”.

often lumped together on the Internet as “proverbs”), which can help the translator with an unfamiliar proverb.

To sum up, the translator has three strategies to choose from when faced with a proverb or saying:

- 1) Find and use the equivalent proverb or saying in the target language.
- 2) Translate the proverb or saying and explain that it is a proverb or saying in the source language.
- 3) Translate “around” the proverb or saying and just transmit the message into the target language.

Option (3) should be used only when all else fails.

We have chosen to call all the different units described thus far ***micro-units***, because they are the parts that come together to form sentences. Sentences will be described in the following chapter, which concentrates on ***macro-units***, i.e. sentences and how they combine to form texts.

## CHAPTER 6

# Macro-units of translation: The sentence and beyond

In Chapters 4 and 5, we have described various linguistic micro-units and sketched strategies for their translation. In this chapter we shall tackle larger units, the so-called macro-units, such as *sentences*, which may be linked by different cohesive devices into *texts*.

## 6.1 Sentences

*Sentences* are syntactic units that organise information via language-specific rules for combinations of *phrases* and *syntactic relations*. The core of a sentence is its subject-predicate structure, to which can be added various types of modifying elements such as adverbs for instance:

1. 博さんはやがてカナダを訪れた。

Hiroshi-san ha yagate Kanada wo otozureta.

Hiroshi TIT TOP finally Canada OBJ has visited

topic ADV OBJ PRED (verb-past)

“Hiroshi has finally visited Canada.”

This example contains one *proposition*, that is, one meaning-unit conceived of as an *idea*, which represents one *state-of-affairs*. Sentences may, however, contain several propositions, each relating one state-of-affairs, which can be coordinated or subordinated by different means.

2. 博さんは、北海道の方で、飛行機が嫌いなのに、カナダの漁業を勉強したいから、やがてカナダを訪れた。

Hiroshi-san ha, Hokkaidō no kata de, hikōki ga kirai no ni,

Hiroshi TIT TOP Hokkaidō ATTR person COPULA airplane OBJ hates CONC

Kanada no gyogyō wo benkyō shitai kara, yagate Kanada wo oto-zureta.

Canada ATTR fishery OBJ wanted to study because finally Canada OBJ has visited.

“Hiroshi is from Hokkaido, and although he hates flying, he has finally visited Canada because he wanted to study Canadian fishery.”

In this sentence, we have at least five propositions within the sentence border, which all give some information about Hiroshi:

### Hiroshi

- is from Hokkaido
- does not like airplanes
- wants (to)
- study fishing industry
- **visits Canada**

The way different pieces of information are packed within a sentence - for example in primary or secondary syntactic functions, or by coordinating or subordinating - provides them with different informational weight or prominence. Thus some elements are **fore-grounded** (subject and main verb, **in bold** in the example above), and others **back-grounded** (e.g. adverbs and subordinate elements).

As languages differ in the way they pack and order different pieces of information within the sentence border, very careful attention must be paid to the rendering of **information structure** in translation tasks. New and known information, fore-grounding and back-grounding, must be respected and transferred via the correct syntactic ordering in the target language. However, at the same time it must be realised that **word order** in Japanese is so

different from English word order that some rearrangement of the order in which information is presented will always be necessary. If translators, in their eagerness to be faithful to the original text, fail to produce a natural sounding sentence in English, the *rhythm* of the text will be disturbed. This, inevitably, makes the translation sound “off”, unnatural and marked.

Sometimes we want to give so much information about a topic, that is, to present so many ideas representing numerous states-of-affairs, that one sentence does not suffice. Theoretically there is no syntactic upper limit for how long a sentence can be, because of the principle of syntactic *recursivity*, which means that a syntactic structure can be reiterated. We can coordinate several adjectives to a noun for example; coordinate several nouns as subjects or objects, and coordinate or subordinate several phrases within the sentence limit. Cognitively, however, there are limits to the human capacity for processing information, not least due to limits on memory. Therefore, instead of cramming all information into one sentence, we often prefer to spread information over several successive sentences. In other words, we produce a text which must, however, still respect certain rules in order for the sequence of sentences to be conceived of as a text. First of all we must compose and order sentences so that the sequence forms a coherent whole.

In this perspective, sentences have to be regarded in a different light. In fact, a sentence can be seen as a unit *linking up* to a preceding unit of information, and *announcing* a succeeding unit. There must be something in a sentence which makes it possible for the receiver to recognise something known from previous sentences and something which contributes new information to add to what is already known. This sentence phenomenon of presenting something *known* and something *new* at the same time is called the *communicative dynamism* of the sentence.

In Japanese and most Indo-European languages such as English, sentence structuring obeys a principle of starting with the known and ending with the new, often with a certain graduation with the “newest” in the final position of the sentence. The known information, termed the *theme* or *topic*, often occupies

subject position in both Japanese and Indo-European languages, and the new information, the *rheme* or *comment*, is often put in the predication part of the sentence. In the sentence below, “*Hiroshi-san ha*” is the theme or topic, “*Kanada wo otozureta*” is the rheme or comment:

3. 博さんはカナダを訪れました。

*Hiroshi-san ha Kanada wo otozureta.*

Hiroshi TIT TOP Canada OBJ visited.

“Hiroshi visited Canada.”

This principle of given/new has also been described as the sentence structure having positions providing for *backward-looking centres*, and other positions favouring *forward-looking centres*. In text structuring in Indo-European languages, backward-looking centres are to be found mainly in the beginning of the sentence, and forward-looking centres at the end, a text structuring principle which is cognitively consistent, since the “last-talked-about” entity reappears in the succeeding sentence as the “first-talked-about”. This creates a tight linking between adjacent sentences, as shown in Figure 5 and the following example:

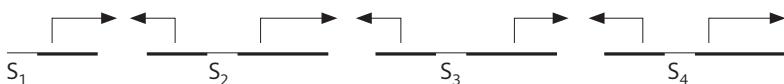


Figure 5. Backward- and forward-looking centres in the sentence structure in Indo-European languages

4. Tom has finally visited Japan. This country has always exerted an



enormous influence on English people. They rarely travel so far abroad.

A progression from sentence to sentence, as the one illustrated in Figure 5 is called a *linear progression*: an element from the rheme/comment part reoccurs as the theme/topic of the next sentence.

Since Japanese prefers to leave out any overt reference to the “last-talked-about” in the following sentence, unless there is some ambiguity which requires repetition, the linear progression structure is not as transparent in Japanese texts. In the following example, for instance, *Kanada* is the forward-looking centre in the first sentence. The second sentence repeats it as the topic (to show that the topic is no longer *Hiroshi-san*). *Nihon no kankōkyaku* is the forward-looking centre in the second sentence, and since it is the subject, there is no need to repeat it in the third sentence, which has no overt backward-looking centre. This creates a much looser sentence linking than we saw in the English example above:

5.  博さんはやがてカナダを訪れました。カナダは最近日本の観光客が多いです。Ø スキーに行きます。

*Hiroshi-san ha yagate Kanada wo otozuremashita. Kanada ha saikin Nihon no*

Hiroshi TIT TOP finally Canada OBJ has visited Canada TOP recently Japan ATTR

*kankōkyaku ga ōi desu. Sukii ni ikimasu.*  
tourists SUBJ numerous COPULA Skiing INDIR OBJ go

“Hiroshi finally visited Canada. Recently, there are many Japanese tourists there. They go there to ski.”

Another type of textual progression favoured in Indo-European languages is a **progression with a constant theme**: the theme is repeated as the grammatical subject in several subsequent sentences. This is an effect of the **subject** – especially if it refers to a human referent in the semantic role **agent** – occupying a privileged position in the textual and cognitive information hierarchy:

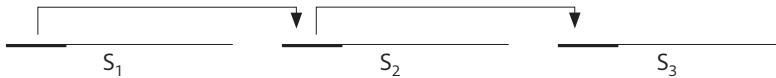


Figure 6. The priority of first position and subject as providing a continuous theme

This type of progression from sentence to sentence is seen in the following example:

6. Tom has finally visited Japan. He has been to many other countries, but only now can he afford the long trip.

In Japanese, this type of progression is also common, but since a known subject is not repeated in a pronoun, the structure is less clear on the surface. When a topic has been mentioned in the first sentence, and no other topic or subject appears in any of the following sentences, it will automatically be assumed to be the subject of the following sentences. Thus, the above English sentence could be a translation of:

6a. トムはやがて日本を訪れた。他の国を多く訪れたが、今になって初めてこんな高い旅行ができるようになった。

Tomu ha yagate Nihon wo otozureta. Hoka no kuni wo ōku otozureta ga,

Tom TOP finally Japan OBJ has visited. Other ATTR countries OBJ many visited but

ima ni natte hajimete konna takai ryokō ga dekiru yō ni natta.

now LOC become for the first time such expensive trip OBJ has become able to

A more literal or faithful translation of the Japanese sentence than 6 would be the following:

6b. “Tom has finally visited Japan. He has visited many other countries, but this is the first time he has been able to go on such an expensive trip.”

Translating from a language with no overtly grammaticalised thematic progression, such as Japanese, into one which needs a syntactically signalled communicative dynamism, requires the translator to work out very clearly “who does what to whom”. This implies a vigilant search for any clue in the Japanese text that can throw up the information needed to choose the correct pronoun to use in the English translation.

## 6.2 Linked sentences

As we saw above, sentences can link up with preceding and succeeding sentences via the mere ordering of informational units in them, for instance via their communicative dynamism, but they may also contain linguistic expressions which explicitly instruct the reader to create a specific kind of semantic coherence between adjacent sentences. Such linguistic expressions, so-called *cohesive devices*, might signal that a given discourse referent is still being talked about or that a new one is being introduced, or they might state how a proposition has to be linked to another in some kind of “rhetorical relation” – such as a logical or temporal relation. Cohesive devices can also take the form of mental space builders, which situate the content of a sentence in a specific, or even new, perspective:

7. トムは初めて日本を訪れた。トレッキングが好きなので、何年も前に、ネパールへ行つた。

*Tomu ha hajimete Nihon wo otozureta. Torekkingu ga suki na node,*

Tom TOP first time Japan OBJ has visited. Trekking OBJ [he]-likes because

*nannen mo mae ni Nepaaru he itta.*

many years ago LOC Nepal to [he] went

“Tom has, for the first time, visited Japan. Many years ago, he went to Nepal, because he likes trekking.”

In the example above, we find the following three types of coherence:

1. **Referential coherence** (same discourse referent): *Tomu - zero - zero*
2. **Semantic, or “rhetorical” coherence**: *node*, “because” = reason, explanation
3. **Mental space builder** (transition to a new “space”): *Nannen mo mae ni*, “Many years ago”. This opens another temporal space, different from the “now” implied by the past form *otozureta*, “has visited”

## 6.3 Referential coherence – simple anaphors

Referential coherence in a text is created when several succeeding expressions refer to one and the same discourse referent. This is done by the so-called **anaphors**, or **anaphoric expressions**, which are most often noun phrases that refer to a discourse referent already present in the discursive memory, the so-called **antecedent**. As shown above in the English sentences, it is often the topic of a sentence which is continued by one or more anaphoric expressions, a procedure which creates a **co-referential chain** in the text. The corresponding anaphors in Japanese are not expressed, but implied, and are thus referred to as *zero*.

Anaphors may consist of different types of expressions, such as null expressions (zero), of pronouns or of lexical noun phrases, such as proper nouns and definite noun phrases. In Japanese, personal pronouns are very highly marked and rarely used, so *zero* anaphors are extremely common. Demonstrative pronouns (e.g. “this”, “that”; *kore*, *sore*, etc.), however, are frequently used as anaphors in both Japanese and English. So are null expressions, lexical noun phrases, and noun phrases preceded by a demonstrative pronoun in attributive form.

*Zero anaphor:*

8. 鈴木さんは部屋に入って椅子に座った。

*Suzuki-san ha heyā ni haitte isu ni suwatta.*

Suzuki TIT TOP room DIR enter chair LOC [zero] sat down

“Mr Suzuki entered the room and (zero) sat down.”

*Pronominal anaphor:*

Personal pronouns are very rarely used anaphorically in Japanese, but they are always needed in English when a new sentence is started with the same subject (and/or object, etc.) as the preceding one. The sentence below is an alternative rendering of the Japanese sentence in example 8:

8a. “Mr Suzuki entered the room. He sat down on a chair.”

Demonstrative pronouns, however, are often used in both Japanese and English as anaphors:

9. 鈴木さんたちはもう十年もカナダで生活している。そこでいい就職もできたり、生活も楽だと感じている。

*Suzuki-san- tachi ha mō jūnen mo Kanada de seikatsu shite iru.*

Suzuki TIT PLUR TOP already ten years even Canada LOC has been living

*Soko de ii shūshoku mo dekita shi, seikatsu mo raku da to kanjite iru.*

There LOC good employment INCL could get CONJ living INCL easy COPULA QUOT feel

“The Suzuki family has already been living in Canada for ten years. They have found good employment, and they feel that living there is easy.”

Another example might be:

10. きのうの夜、神秘的な男性が成田空港に到着しました。その人は、毎年必ず年に一回日本を訪れます……

*Kinō no yoru, shinpitekina dansei ga Narita kūkō ni  
tōchaku shimashita.*

Yesterday ATTR night mysterious man SUBJ Narita Airport LOC arrived.

*Sono hito ha, mai toshi kanarazu nen ni ikkai Nihon wo otozure-masu....*

That man TOP every year without fail year LOC once Japan OBJ visits.

“Yesterday a mysterious man arrived in Narita Airport. This man comes to Japan once a year without fail....”

*Proper noun:*

A person introduced by his full name may be referred back to by a shorter version of the name (example 11) or, in the case of persons possessing a unique title (The Pope, the US president, etc.), the co-referential expression could be the person's name (example 12):

11. 小泉潤一郎さんはけさアメリカに着きました。小泉さんが明日国連の会議に出る予定です。

*Koizumi Junichirō-san ha kesa Amerika ni tsukimashita.*

Koizumi Junichiro TIT TOP this morning America LOC arrived.

*Koizumi-san ga ashita kokuren no kaigi ni deru yotei desu.*

Koizumi TIT SUBJ tomorrow United Nations ATTR meeting LOC appear is scheduled to

“Mr Junichiro Koizumi arrived in the USA this morning. Koizumi is scheduled to take part in a meeting in the UN tomorrow.”

12. アメリカ大統領は今朝テレビに出ました。ブッシュが次のことを主張しました…

*Amerika daitōryō ha kesa terebi ni demashita.*

America president TOP this morning TV INDIR OBJ appeared.

*Bushu ga tsugi no koto wo shuchō shimashita...*

Bush SUBJ following ATTR things OBJ stressed

“The American president appeared on TV this morning. Bush stressed the following points....”

*Definite noun phrase:*

Definite noun phrases are used very often in English, but less so in Japanese. Japanese tends to place the noun phrase as a modifier in front of the main nouns as below:

13a. アメリカ大統領であるジョージ・ブッシュはタベスピーチをして、テロリストに抵抗する必要を主張しました。

*Amerika daitōryō de aru Jooji Busshu ha yūbe supiichi wo shite,*

America president COPULA George Bush TOP last night speech OBJ  
made

*terorisuto ni teikō suru hitsuyō wo shuchō shimashita.*

terrorists INDIR OBJ fight need OBJ stressed

In the English equivalent, the sentence would nearly always combine the two referents as seen below:

13b. George Bush made a speech last night. The president stressed the need to fight terrorists.

Sometimes, when a text treats more than one topic or more than one main character, it may give rise to a **referential indeterminacy** or **referential ambiguity** in that the reader has trouble establishing the correct referential relations. This is a somewhat rare occurrence in Japanese, because Japanese so rarely uses definite noun phrases as anaphors. In English, however, it is quite frequent, and the following example is taken from an English-language newspaper in Hong Kong:

14. David Beckham has revealed that his half-time bust-up with Alpoy Ozalan was provoked by the Turkish defender making insulting remarks about his mother. The England captain had already had an altercation with the Aston Villa player after he had sent his 36<sup>th</sup>-minute penalty high over the bar... (*The Standard*, Hong Kong, October 13, 2003)

The text stages two discourse referents, the football players David Beckham and Alpoy Ozalan, introduced by their names. Further on, the text contains three lexical anaphors consisting of

**lexically varied definite noun phrases** (“the Turkish defender”, “The England captain”, “the Aston Villa player”). In order to establish the correct co-referential chains between these “unfaithful” anaphors (see below), the reader must be able to identify who is who, and that can only be achieved by knowing beforehand who plays what and where. This is probably only possible for a person located in England at the right moment (October 2003), and who has access to the immediate **extra-textual references**, that is, to entities in the “real world” surrounding her/him at that time and place. Or, it is possible that people interested in football would simply *know* that David Beckham is the English captain and Alpoy Ozalan the Aston Villa player.

The reader must also possess some **background knowledge** in order to track the right antecedent for the pronominal anaphors of which there are four (*his* and *he*). Thus, interpreting “his mother” correctly as referring to Beckham’s mother necessitates **general background knowledge** about the fact that insulting someone’s mother might provoke a bust-up. Tracking the correct antecedent(s) for the pronouns in “after he had sent his 36<sup>th</sup>-minute penalty high over the bar” demands another type of special knowledge, namely about the actual situation in which Beckham had sent a penalty over the bar. Otherwise, relying on simple common sense knowledge, the naive reader might be led to induce that “*he*” in “*he* had sent *his* 36<sup>th</sup>-minute penalty over the bar” referred to Ozalan. The text excerpt also demands **specialised knowledge**, here about football games with halves divided in 45 minutes, etc., and shows – short as it is – how many types of knowledge are necessary to make the right **inferences**, so that correct anaphoric chains can be established and the text be turned into a coherent whole (Lundquist 2000).

Here is an example in Japanese with multiple antecedents which may cause ambiguity:

15. 春日局は怒り、お夏、おりさの二人を呼びつけ、蟻居を言い渡す。だがその席にお万が現れ、弱い者同士戦っても、悲しみをいたずらに増やすだけだと二人を説得。

Kasuga Kyoku ha okori, Onatsu, Orisa no futari wo yobit-suke, chikkyo

Kasagu Kyoku TOP got angry, Onatsu, Orisa ATTR 2 people OBJ sent for, house arrest

wo ii wadasu. Daga sono seki ni Oman ga araware, yowai mono dōshi

OBJ ordered. However there LOC Oman SUBJ showed up, fel-low weaklings,

tatakattemo, kanashimi wo itazura ni fuyasu dake da to futari wo settoku.

fight-even if, sorrow OBJ pointlessly increase only COPULA QUOT two people OBJ persuaded.

“Lady Kasuga got angry. She sent for Onatsu and Orisa and ordered house arrest for them. However, Oman showed up there and persuaded the two ladies that even if weak people protested, it would only point-lessly increase their sorrow.”

Four female discourse referents (Lady Kasuga, Onatsu, Orisa and Oman) are introduced in this short excerpt. They are the possible antecedents of the two anaphors, “weak fellows”, yowai mono dōshi, and “the two ladies”, futari. It is easier to identify the anaphoric relationship between futari and its antecedent, Onatsu and Orisa, because the two of them have been recognised as a group since the beginning of the excerpt. The antecedent of “weak people” is almost impossible to recognise if the reader does not possess any specialised knowledge about Ōoku. Ōoku were the quarters where the Shogun’s consort and concubines lived in the Edo period. Men, except the Shogun, were restricted from entering. Onatsu, Orisa and Oman were concubines living in Ōoku which was under Kasuga’s supervision. All the concubines living in Ōoku were regarded as the Shogun’s subordinates. Their only living purpose was to serve the Shogun and give birth to his offspring. They were a powerless group in the castle. Therefore, the “weak people” in Oman’s persuasion are actually referring to all three of them and also other concubines in Ōoku.

### 6.3.1 Unfaithful anaphors

Lexically varied definite noun phrases as in the examples below are called ***unfaithful anaphors*** because the interpreter cannot easily relate them to a specific antecedent. In fact, such definite noun phrases may refer to quite another discourse referent in the text, or they may introduce a new discourse referent into the text. In the first case, they are intended to lead to a co-referential reading, in the second to a disjoint reading.

As sentence subjects are so frequently left out in Japanese, the occurrence of unfaithful anaphors is also rare. They do, however, occur, as for instance in the *Tensei Jingo* text introduced in Chapter 2.2. In that text, several famous Japanese swimmers are mentioned by name throughout the text, and in the final sentence we find an anaphoric reference whose antecedent is not easily identifiable. Possible antecedents (Furukama, Taguchi and Kitajima) and the unfaithful anaphor (the 20-year-old who...) are underlined in the excerpt below:

16. 古川選手は子どものころ和歌山県の紀の川で泳ぎ、成長した。田口選手は愛媛県の養魚池でコイを追いながら平泳ぎを覚えたという。時代の違いを感じる。北島選手には、ハ イテク時代に微差を競う別のつらさがあるかもしれない。

平泳ぎの歴史に、忘れられない場面をもう一つ加えた 20 歳だった。

The last sentence says: “It was a twenty-year-old who added another page of unforgettable scenes to the history of breast-stroke.” Background knowledge (only partly provided in the text) is needed to infer that the 20-year-old must refer to Kitajima - he is the youngest of the three mentioned, he is in focus in the main parts of the article, and his recent world record was achieved just a few days before the article was published.

Here is another example:

17. 十三年前、「ぼくはジョナサン…エイズなの」という本を出版、来日して注目を集めた米国の少年が、去年結婚し、一児のパパになっていた。このジョナサン君との出会いがきっかけで薬害エイズ被害者として実名を公表、エイズへの理解を訴える活動を続けてきた川田龍平さん(29)も、「勇気づけられた」と話している。

米国ユタ州に暮らすジョナサン・スウェインさん(21)は、赤ちゃんのときの輸血が原因で、エイズウイルス(HIV)に感染した。

『読売新聞 2005年2月22日国際版12版』

*Jūsan nen mae, boku ha jonasan... eizu na no to iu hon wo shuppan, rainichi shite*

13 years ago, I TOP Jonathan AIDS COPULA FIN ATTR book OBJ published, visited Japan

*chūmoku wo atsumeta beikoku no shōnen ga, kyōnen kekkon shi, hitoji no*

attention OBJ attracted America ATTR young man SUBJ last year married, 1 child POSS

*papa ni natte ita. Kono jonasan kun to no deai ga kikkake de yakugai*

daddy became. This Jonathan TIT INCL ATTR encounter SUBJ a start CAUS medicine-harm

*eizu higaisha toshite jitsumei wo kōhyō, eizu he no rikai wo uttaeru*

AIDS victim as real name OBJ made public, AIDS DIR ATTR understand OBJ appealing

*katsudō wo tsuzukete kita kawata ryūhei san mo, yūkizukerareta to hanashite iru.*

activities OBJ have continued Kawata Ryūhei TIT INCL, courage was given QUOT says

*Beikoku yuta shū ni kurasu jonasan suwein san ha, akachan no toki*

America Utah state LOC live Jonathan Swain TIT TOP baby ATTR time

*no yuketsu ga gen'in de, eizu uirusu ni kansen shita.*

ATTR blood transfusion SUBJ cause COPULA, AIDS virus INDIR OBJ infected.

"13 years ago, the young American man who published My Name is Jonathan: and I have AIDS, visited Japan and attracted attention. Jonathan Swain (21) of Utah State got married last year and has become the father of one child. Kawata Ryuuhei (29) was inspired by his encounter with Jonathan and said "I was encouraged." The AIDS patient, also a victim of contaminated blood products, made his real name public and has continued to appeal for public understanding of AIDS.

Swain contracted the deadly virus (HIV) via a blood transfusion when he was a baby." (From the newspaper *Yomiuri Shinbun*, February 22, 2005)

Jonathan Swain is referred to in various ways in the Japanese excerpt. The first reference simply calls him "the American young man" although this is preceded by the title of the book he wrote, *My Name is Jonathan: and I have AIDS*. Then he is referred to as "this Jonathan". At this point, one more discourse referent is introduced, namely Kawata Ryūhei, who went public with his own AIDS disease after being inspired by Jonathan Swain. Finally, Jonathan Swain is referred to with his full name, age, home state and country. In terms of "antecedent" and "anaphor", this may seem slightly topsy-turvy. English tends to lead to a description after presenting the discourse referents clearly whereas Japanese often starts with a vague reference and leads up to a more precise one.

Unfaithful anaphors are very frequent in English, because they are used to create variation in texts that have a **progression with a constant theme**. The unfaithful anaphors make up for the enforced repetition of the antecedent, which could make a text seem repetitive and dull if only pronouns and names were used. In Japanese, the possibility of relying on a *zero* anaphor ensures that the text does not so easily appear repetitive of the theme. Unfaithful anaphors occur not least in journalistic texts, since they make it possible to introduce a new aspect (about the topic talked about) into the text without having to make one or more full propositions:

18. Arnold Schwarzenegger has lived in California for a long time. The Austrian actor has appeared in numerous movies. But recently the Terminator has had a career change. The new governor of California may find himself facing problems that can no longer be solved easily by using physical force.

In the above example the four underlined noun phrases refer to the same person and each presents new information, which could otherwise have been expressed in full propositions, such as: Schwarzenegger is an Austrian actor, who has played the role of Terminator, and who has recently been elected governor of California.

Unfaithful anaphors may be a useful strategy in translating from Japanese to English. Every time a subject is *zero* in a Japanese sentence, a proper subject has to be used in the English translation. To avoid using pronouns every single time, various other types of anaphors may well be used, and sometimes even unfaithful anaphors may come into play. Here is an example:

19. リ・チュアン・ Yunさんは1996年に卒業して、ニューヨークへ引っ越した。ジュリ  
アード音楽院の奨学金をもらったので、りさんの先生もとても嬉しかった。

*Ri chuan yun san ha 1996 nen ni sotsugyō shite, nyūyōku he hikkoshita.*

Li Chuan Yun TIT TOP 1996 year LOC graduated, New York DIR moved.

*Jyuriaado ongakuin no shōgakukin wo moratta no de, ri san no sensei mo totomo ureshikatta.*

Julliard music school ATTR scholarship OBJ received CAUS, Li TIT POSS teacher INCL very was glad.

“Li Chuan-yun graduated and moved to New York in 1996. His teacher was overjoyed that the young violinist had won a scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music.”

Unfaithful anaphors thus present an economical, abbreviated way of introducing a (reduced) proposition, but the use of un-

faithful anaphors is also a risky affair, since the reader might interpret them as not being co-referential.

20. 今朝気分が悪くて、お医者さんへ行った。途中で、大学の友達の加藤君に会つて、彼はにこつと笑って挨拶してくれた。

*kesa        kibun    ga warukute, oisha    san he itta. Tochū de,    daigaku    no tomodachi*

This morning feeling SUBJ was bad. Doctor TIT DIR go on my way, university ATTR friend

*no        katō    kun    ni        atte, kare ha nikotto waratte aisatsu shite kureta.*

ATTR Katō    TIT    INDIR OBJ    met, he TOP    grin                greet  
gave me

“I was sick this morning, so I went to the clinic. On my way. I met Katō, my college friend. The young doctor greeted me with a big smile.”

The translation above is risky since the reader may misinterpret “the young doctor” as the doctor whom the narrator had seen at the clinic, rather than as the friend, Katō.

Translating a text from Language 1 into Language 2 requires keeping a keen eye on expressions, not least zero expressions, in the source text which create referential chains; it also requires making a careful consideration of what means to choose in the target text in order to make the referential coherence as accessible to the target text reader as it was to the reader of the source text. The use of incorrect anaphoric expressions – incorrect either because they are downright wrong or simply because they are not explicit and unambiguous enough – may ruin the coherence of the text. This is not least to be paid attention to when translating the occasional unfaithful anaphor from Japanese, because the correct interpretation may demand some kind of background knowledge that the reader of the target text does not necessarily possess. The translator thus has to consider if the necessary background knowledge should be supplied by other linguistic means, for example by a full proposition.

### 6.3.2 Resumptive anaphors

Another very important type of anaphor is the so-called **resumptive** anaphor, “resumptive” because it summarises the content of a whole (or even several) preceding proposition(s). In English, resumptive anaphors may consist of the demonstrative pronouns “this” and “that”, or of definite or determinate lexical noun phrases, such as abstract or vague nouns, often derived from verbs, for instance “the/this/that procedure, suggestion, idea, fight, event, story”; “these assertions, claims, demands, words”, etc. In Japanese, the three demonstratives *ko*, *so*, and *a* are frequently used in resumptive anaphors, either in their nominal form, *kore*, *sore*, *are*, “this”, “that”, “that (over there)”, or in their attributive forms, *kono*, *sono*, *ano*, “this”, “that”; *kōiu*, *sōiu*, *aaiu*, “such”; *konna*, *sonna*, *anna*, “this kind of”, “that kind of”, combined with a noun which may be abstract or vague, just like in English, or it may be a concrete noun repeated from the content of what the resumptive anaphor refers back to. Finally, the three demonstratives may be used in their locative form, *koko*, *soko*, *asoko*, such as for instance *koko de ha*, “at this point (in time/in the story).”

21. たとえば、太陽系をモデルにして、原子構造というようなものを考えてみる、  
というようなものです。それは、あるイメージを作り、それによって、現実の  
事物を理解するということになるわけです。

*Tatoeba taiyōkei wo moderu ni shite, genshi kōzō toiu yōna mono wo kangaete miru,*

For example solar system OBJ model take as atomic structure ATTR  
similar thing OBJ think-try

*to iu yōna mono desu. Sore ha, aru imeeji wo tsukuri,*

ATTR similar thing COPULA. That TOP a certain image OBJ make

*sore ni yotte, genjitsu no jibutsu wo rikai suru to iu koto ni naru wake desu.*

that according to reality ATTR things OBJ understand ATTR thing be-  
come reason COPULA

This text – an excerpt from an essay by the Nobel Prize winner Hideki Yukawa – contains one resumptive anaphor, namely *sore*, “that”. The first sentence says “It is like taking, for instance, the solar system as the model to think about something like the structure of the atom”. *Sore ha*, “that”, at the beginning of the next sentence, resumes the propositional content of the first sentence in its entirety, namely “that means that one makes a certain image in one’s mind, and according to that [image], one understands the real world.”

Similarly, in the following example, the resumptive lexical anaphor, *sono tame ni*, “in order to do that”, resumes a sentence in its entirety:

22. 彼のいう赤い印象と私の印象と同じであるか違うのかを決めるためには、その二つを比べてみなければならない。そのためには、私は彼の印象をとにかく知らなければならない。

Kare no iu akai inshō to watashi no inshō to ga  
onaji de aru ka

He SUBJ say red impression COMP I POSS impression COMP SUBJ  
same COPULA QUEST

chigau no ka wo kimeru tame ni ha, sono futatsu wo kurabete  
minakereba naranai.

Different ASS QUEST OBJ decide in order to TOP those two OBJ com-  
pare-try-must

Sono tame ni ha, watashi ha kare no inshō wo tonikaku shi-  
ranakereba naranai.

That in order to TOP I TOP he POSS impression OBJ anyway  
know-must

The first sentence says that “to find out whether his impression of the colour red is the same as mine, it is necessary to compare the two”. The second sentence starts with the resumptive anaphor and says “In order to do that (= find out whether the two impressions are the same), I must, at least, know his impression”.

Here are a few more examples:

23. 日本人自ら、誰が、一体どうやって三百万人も死ぬような戦争を始め、遂行したのかを理解してこそ、そういうことまで明らかにする国家に愛着が持てるわけですし、けじめもつきます。

(武士道ホームページ (<http://www.pdfworld.co.jp/bushidou/>)

*Nihonjin mizukara, dare ga, ittai dōyatte sanbyakuman nin mo shinu yōna sensō wo*

Japanese themselves, who SUBJ, really how 3 million men INCL die kind of war OBJ

*hajime, suikō shita no ka wo rikai shite koso, sōiukoto made akiraka ni*

start, executed ATTR QUEST OBJ understand only when, such thing even clearly

*suru kokka ni aichaku ga moteru wake desu shi, kejime mo tsuki masu.*

make country IND OBJ loyalty SUBJ can carry reason COPULA and, line INCL can draw.

“The Japanese themselves have to understand exactly by whom and in what way such a war, in which as many as 3 million people died, was started and executed. A country must, at least, make such things clear in order for its people to feel loyalty and be able to draw a line.” (From the Japanese martial arts’ homepage)

24. 警察当局は、バルコニー使用を認めず、排除する方針と伝えられたが、結局、黙認した形になった。

これを、言論の自由への理解とみるか、単なる混乱回避の便法とみるか。権力を持った者への自由を批判を認めてこそ、民主主義だ。そうであってこそ、経済も繁栄する。言論が不自由であれば、経済も自由を保つことはできまい。

『天声人語 1997年7月12日』

*Keisatsu tōkyoku ha, barukonii shiyō wo mitomezu, haijyo suru hōshin*

Police authorities TOP, balcony use OBJ approve-not, remove policy

*to tsutaerareta ga, kekkyoku, mokunin shita katachi ni natta.*

QUOT was reported CONC, in the end permitted tacitly style became.

*Kore wo, genron no jiyū he no rikai to miru ka,*

This OBJ, speech ATTR freedom DIR ATTR understand regard as QUEST

*tannaru konran kaihi no benpō to miru ka. Ken-ryoku wo motta mono*

mere confusion avoidance ATTR easy method regard as QUEST. Power OBJ had person

*he no jiyū na hihan wo mitomete koso, minshu shugi da.*  
*Sō de atte*

DIR ATTR free criticism OBJ accept only when, democracy COPULA.  
 That COPULA

*koso, keizai mo hanei suru. Genron ga fujiyū de areba,*  
 only when economy INCL prosper. Speech SUBJ not-free COPULA-if,

*keizai mo jiyū wo tamotsu koto ha deki mai.*  
 economy INCL freedom OBJ maintain thing TOP can-not-probably.

“The police reportedly did not at first intend to allow the former lawmakers to speak from the balcony, but in the end they apparently decided to look the other way.”

“Is this to be interpreted as a recognition of the freedom of speech? Or was it just an expedient move to avoid chaos? Permitting free criticism of those in power is just what democracy is. Only under such conditions can the economy prosper. The economy will probably be unable to maintain its freedom, if there is no freedom of speech.” (*Vox Populi, Vox Dei*, Asahi Shinbun, July 12, 1997)

Resumptive anaphors keep larger sections of a text together, and therefore it is, of course, imperative that they be respected and rendered adequately in the target text.

## 6.4 Semantic, or rhetorical coherence

*Semantic coherence*, or *rhetorical coherence*, designates relations of a temporal or logical kind which can be either implicitly intended or explicitly expressed between adjacent sentences.

Temporal (*P and then Q*) and logical relations (*P and therefore Q*) may be the outcome of the mere **linear ordering** of sentences. Sometimes this ordering of sentences imitates the order in which the events referred to take place in the real world, or, rather, in our mental representation of the world. When this is the case, we *infer* a **temporal** relation of the kind **first P – then Y**, or a **logical** relation of **consequence**, **P – therefore Q**. In Japanese this can be marked by conjunctional particles, such as *-te* or *-ga*, which can be interpreted as both temporal and causal, and even adversative (in the case of *-ga*) relationships. If there is a full stop between two sentences, a temporal relation can be inferred as in the following example:

25. 早速車にのった。急いで病院へ向かった。

*Sassoku kuruma ni notta. Isoide byōin he mukatta.*

at once car DIR got on urgently hospital DIR turned towards

“They got into the car at once. Urgently they drove towards the hospital.”  
(first P – then Y)

Similarly when the relation is a logical or causal one:

26. 隆君は花子さんを蹴つ飛ばした。花子さんが怪我をした。

*Takashi-kun ha Hanako-san wo kettobashita. Hanako-san ga kega wo shita.*

Takashi TIT TOP Hanako TIT OBJ kicked hard Hanako TIT SUBJ got hurt

“Takashi kicked Hanako. Hanako was hurt.” (first P – then Q)

The inferred order in such cases is called the **iconic order** because there is a resemblance (iconicity) between the order of the events narrated and the order of the naturally occurring events, and this induces a temporal and/or consequential reading.

In English, the **reverse ordering** of the sentence in example 26 would lead us to infer a semantic relation of another rhetorical

type, namely of the *explanation* type, in which the second sentence gives the *cause*:

27a. (i) Hanako was hurt. Takashi kicked her.  
 (ii) Hanako was hurt **because** Takashi kicked her.

A “therefore” reading of the last sentence in 27a(i) would not fit our conception of causes and consequences and our expectations about normal human behaviour (normally decent people do not kick a person who is injured). It would not be a *plausible* reading, and therefore we automatically reverse the inference into the more plausible **P – because Q** relation shown in 27a(ii).

In Japanese it would rarely be left to the reader to figure out the most plausible reading, because of the easily available conjunctional particles that can make the relationship between the two events unambiguous. It is therefore unlikely that we would find example 27b, unless the idea really was that Takashi kicked Hanako *after* she was hurt:

27b. ?花子さんはけがをした。隆君は花子さんを蹴つ飛ばした  
*?Hanako-san ha kega wo shita. Takashi-kun wa Hanako-san wo ket-tobashita.*  
 Hanako TIT TOP got hurt      Takashi    TOP Hanako TIT OBJ  
 kicked hard  
 ?Hanako was hurt. Then Takashi kicked her.

Instead we would find example 27c, in which the relation has been made explicit:

27c. 花子さんは怪我をした。隆君は花子さんをけつとばしたから。  
*Hanako-san ha kega wo shita. Takashi-kun ha Hanako-san wo ket-tobashita kara.*  
 Hanako TIT TOP got hurt      Takashi    TOP Hanako TIT OBJ  
 kicked hard because  
 “Hanako was hurt. It was because Takashi kicked her.”

A more likely version of example 27c would, however, require a passive construction in the second sentence:

27c(1) 花子さんは怪我をした。隆君にけつとばされたから。

*Hanako-san ha kega wo shita. Takashi-kun ni kettobasareta kara.*

Hanako TIT TOP got hurt      Takashi      AGENT was kicked  
because

“Hanako was hurt. It was because she was kicked by Takashi.”

In the examples above it has been shown that coherence may be based on *inferences*. Inferences are deductions that people make, or conclusions that they draw from their basic assumptions about how things take place in the “real world”, or rather in their mental representation of the world. Our experience with how things are construed and phenomena related provides us with some general reasoning schemes of which we make use in all our daily and professional activities, and hence also in our interpretation of texts.

In translation tasks it is important to pay attention to implicit semantic relations inferable between adjacent sentences, in order to see to it that the same type of semantic relation be accessible to the reader of the target text.

Sometimes the mere linearisation of sentences (i.e. the sequencing of sentences in a specific order) does not suffice to imply which relation to establish between them. In order to specify what type of semantic relation is to be created, the sender of a text can resort to the use of *connectors*.

## 6.5 Connectors

Connectors are linguistic expressions which explicitly connect sentences. They consist of an inventory of heterogeneous phrases and words – conjunctions, adverbs, fixed expressions – such as, for instance, “and”, “but”, “because”, “therefore”, “hence”, “for

the same reason”, “in a similar vein”, “this is the reason why”, and a host of others.

Connectors can be described and categorised according to the **kind of relation** that they specify between two sentences. See the examples below:

Type of relation	Examples	
	Japanese	English
<b>Additive:</b>	<i>-te, -ga, soshite, -shi, etc.</i>	and, moreover, furthermore, etc.
<b>Contrastive:</b>	<i>-ga, keredomo, daga, shikashi, etc.</i>	but, however, yet, still, in opposition, etc.
<b>Causal:</b>	<i>-kara, -node, etc.</i>	because, since, etc.
<b>Consequential:</b>	<i>dakara, yue ni, etc.</i>	therefore, thus, hence, etc.
<b>Temporal:</b>	<i>sorekara, -toki, -tara, -nagara, mae ni, etc.</i>	then, next, afterwards, before, while, etc.
<b>Text structuring:</b>	<i>daiichi ni, daini ni, saisho, tsugi ni, saigo ni, etc.</i>	first, second, third; first, then, finally, etc.
<b>Conditional:</b>	<i>-tara, -ba, nara, moshi, etc.</i>	if, in case, etc.

As connectors may be ambiguous or polysemic, i.e. have several potential meanings, in the source language as well as in the target language, the correct interpretation of semantic coherence relations in a source text is an inescapable prerequisite for a well thought-out rendering into the target text.

## 6.6 Argumentative markers

A specific type of semantic coherence relation is the one created in the first sentence of a sentence pair by an **argumentative marker**. Argumentative markers are expressions such as *mō*, “already”; *mada*, “not yet”; *mo*, “even”; *shika*, “no more than” – or in English, “more/less than”, “(a) few”, “(a) little”, “many/few”, “good/bad”, which orient the reader towards a certain conclu-

sion. This is why the presence of an argumentative expression in a sentence induces restrictions on how the sentence can be continued by the next sentence. The examples below show that whereas a sentence with no argumentative marker can continue in either direction, the insertion of an argumentative expression restricts the continuation:

28a. 田中氏は 2 3 万票を獲得した。当選は確実だ。

*Tanaka-shi ha 23-manhyō wo kakutoku shita. Tōsen ha kakujitsu da.*

Tanaka TIT TOP 230,000 votes OBJ obtained. Be elected TOP certain COPULA.

“Mr Tanaka obtained 230,000 votes. He is certain to be elected.”

28b. 田中氏は 2 3 万票を獲得した。落選は確実だ。

*Tanaka-shi ha 23-manhyō wo kakutoku shita. Rakusen ha kakujitsu da.*

Tanaka TIT TOP 230,000 votes OBJ obtained. Lose an election TOP certain COPULA.

“Mr Tanaka obtained 230,000 votes. He is bound to lose.”

The first sentence in the above two examples has no argumentative markers, so the second sentence has no restrictions imposed on it. Compare with the following examples:

29a. 田中氏はすでに 2 3 万票を獲得した。当選は確実だ。

*Tanaka-shi ha sudeni 23-manhyō wo kakutoku shita. Tōsen ha kakujitsu da.*

Tanaka TIT TOP already 230,000 votes OBJ obtained. Be elected TOP certain COPULA.

“Mr Tanaka has already obtained 230,000 votes. He is certain to be elected.”

29b. 田中氏はまだ 2 3 万票しか獲得していない。落選は確実だ。

*Tanaka-shi ha mada 23-manhyō shika kakutoku shite inai. Rakusen ha kakujitsu da.*

Tanaka TIT TOP not 230,000 votes more than obtained-not.  
Lose an election TOP certain is.

(the correlation with *mada* ~ *shika* = no more than)

“Mr Tanaka has obtained no more than 230,000 votes. He is bound to lose.”

29c. \*田中氏はもう 2 3 万票も獲得した。落選は確実だ

\**Tanaka-shi ha mō 23-manhyō mo kakutoku shita. Rakusen ha kakujitsu da.*

\*“Mr Tanaka has already obtained all of 230,000 votes. He is bound to lose.”

29d. \*田中氏はまだ 2 3 万票しか獲得していない。当選は確実だ。

\**Tanaka-shi ha mada 23-manhyō shika kakutoku shite inai. Tōsen ha kakujitsu da.*

\*“Mr Tanaka has not even obtained 230,000 votes yet. He is certain to be elected.”

A similar example could be:

30a. 緑さんは一生懸命勉強した。受験はうまくいくだろう。

*Midori-san ha isshōkenmei benkyō shita.*  
*Juken ha umaku iku darō.*

Midori TIT TOP with her whole heart studied.  
Entrance examination TOP go well probably

“Midori studied hard.  
She will probably do well in her entrance exams.”

30b. \*緑さんは一生懸命勉強した。受験はうまくいかないだろう。

\**Midori-san ha isshōkenmei benkyō shita. Juken ha umaku ikanai darō.*

\*“Midori studied hard. She will probably not do well in her entrance exams.”

30c. 緑さんはあまり勉強しなかった。受験はうまくいかないだろう。

Midori-san ha amari benkyō shinakatta. Juken ha umaku ikanai darō.

Midori TIT TOP (not) much study-did. Entrance examination TOP go well-will not probably.

“Midori did not study very hard. She will probably not do well in her entrance exams.”

30d. \*緑さんはあまり勉強しなかった。受験はうまくいくだろう。

\*Midori-san ha amari benkyō shinakatta. Juken ha umaku iku darō.

\*“Midori did not study very hard. She will probably do well in her entrance exams.”

The reason for these restrictions is that one series of argumentative operators, for instance *isshōkenmei*, *mō*, *mo*, point “upwards” towards a positive conclusion, for which reason they can only be followed by a sentence referring to a good result. The other series, *amari*, *shika...nai*, etc., point “downwards”, towards a negative conclusion, thus restricting the continuation to a sentence referring to a bad result.

This phenomenon has been explained as an argumentative reasoning scheme, the *topos* (Ducrot 1988, Jarvella et al. 1995), which contains an antecedent and a consequent that are both graded (in order to illustrate the scales):

*<the more (the less) P is the case, the more (the less) Q is the case>*.

Argumentative directions can be contained in a host of other less easily definable expressions, for instance in mere *evaluating expressions*:

31a. すばらしい映画です。見に行きなさいよ!

Subarashii eiga desu. Mi ni ikinasai yo!

Fantastic movie COPULA. See-in order to-go! FIN.

“It’s a fantastic movie. Go see it!”

31b. ?\*すばらしい映画です。絶対見ないでよ!

?\**Subarashii eiga desu. Zettai minaide yo!*

?\*“It’s a fantastic movie. Don’t go see it!”

The first example is coherent because of a **topos** stating that *<the more fantastic a film is, the more reason there is to go and see it>*. The second example violates this **topos**, for which reason the receiver probably has to resort to an ironic reading, or to some more idiosyncratic knowledge, e.g. that the addressee is such a negative person that he or she would not even enjoy a fantastic movie!

As argumentative valorisations of sentences can be almost everywhere, and as they play a fundamental role in conveying an overall argumentative coherence to a text, they must be observed meticulously in the source text, and be rendered faithfully into the target text. If they are overlooked, you may end up producing texts like the ones marked with \* above, that is, incoherent and utterly inconsistent texts.

## 6.7 Mental space builders

The core information in a sentence is mostly encoded in the subject-predicate part of the sentence. But this central information can be **framed** in various ways. This is first and foremost done by the so-called **mental space builders**, which in both English and Japanese tend to occupy the first position in a sentence. Thereby they open a certain “mental space” in which to put and consider the information proper.

### Mental space builders opening

#### *Temporal space:*

32. 1971年に香港大学を卒業した。1980年に政治家になった。

1971-nen ni Honkon- daigaku wo sotsugyō shita. 1980-nen ni  
seijika ni natta.

1971 year LOC Hong Kong University OBJ graduated. 1980 year LOC politician became

“In 1971 he graduated from The University of Hong Kong. In 1980 he became a politician.”

*Geographical space:*

33. 九州では桜が咲いています。北海道では雪がまだ溶けません。

Kyūshū de ha sakura ga saiteimasu.

Kyushu LOC TOP cherry blossom SUBJ are blooming.

Hokkaidō de ha yuki ga mada tokemasen.

Hokkaido LOC TOP snow SUBJ not yet has melted.

“In Kyushu, the cherry blossoms are blooming. In Hokkaido, the snow has not melted yet.”

*“Thematic” space:*

34. 大統領の意見では、もう始まつてもいい。外務省のほうでは、もう少し待ちたいといふ。

Daitōryō no iken de ha, mō hajimattemo ii.

President POSS opinion LOC TOP already OK-to-start.

Gaimushō no hō de ha, mō sukoshi machi tai to iu.

Foreign Ministry POSS side LOC TOP more a bit wait want to QUOT say

“According to the Prime Minister’s views, they can start. As for the Foreign Ministry, they say they want to wait a little.”

*“Cognitive” space:*

35. 理論的には問題がない。しかし、実際的にはもう少しむずかしいらしい。

Riron teki ni ha mondai ga nai. Shikashi, jissaiteki ni ha mō sukoshi muzukashii rashii.

Theoretically TOP problem SUBJ not be. However, in practice TOP more a bit difficult seem

“Theoretically there is no problem. But in practice things are more difficult, it seems.”

When used in ongoing texts, mental space builders mark ***transitions*** into new frames in which the content – the discourse referent or the propositional content – has to be considered, but at the same time they ***link up*** to something in the preceding text. Therefore the translator should pay attention to the textual function of such adverbial phrases and make sure that they are expressed correctly and placed in the right place in the communicative dynamism of the target text.

Keeping an eye on macro-units such as sentences and their linking across the sentence border is vital for the translator in order to create a coherent and readable text in the target language. But texts form part of even greater units, mega-units, to which we will now turn.

# PART III

THE TARGET TEXT AND ITS REVISION



## CHAPTER 7

# Mega-units and revision of the target text

After having looked at micro-units and worked our way up through macro-units, we shall now go beyond the word, sentence and text and address **mega-units**. Mega-units, such as *genre* and *text type*, are, in actual fact, not real “units”, but rather more general phenomena, which influence how a text is conceived, formed and constructed by the sender, and also how it is received, understood and interpreted by the receiver. This is also why **revision**, the third step in every translation process, comes into the picture here; revision of the target text should – apart from controlling strictly linguistic matters, such as orthography, grammar, idioms, etc., in the target language – check that the local choices made during translating are in line with the global strategy adopted. But in the revision step, one should also check that the target text seems natural and acceptable for the new receivers.

## 7.1 Textual fit and intertextuality

An important and interesting concept in this respect is the concept of **target text family fit** or simply **textual fit** (Chesterman 2004, 6), which refers to comparable or parallel texts in the target language which are **not translated**. Textual fit is defined in these terms:

This relation (i.e. textual fit) concerns the degree to which the linguistic profile of a translation matches the linguistic

profile of the relevant family of texts in the target language; this textual family is made up of *independently produced texts* (not translated from source texts) of *the same kind*, with *the same subject matter* and with *the same kind of function* (Chesterman 2004, 6; our emphasis).

In the second step of the translation process attention was paid to the source text and its linguistic formulation. In the third and last step in the translation process, the revision, one should focus on the relation of the target text to the relevant text family in the target language. This shift of focus is shown in Figure 7 (NTT = “not translated texts”):

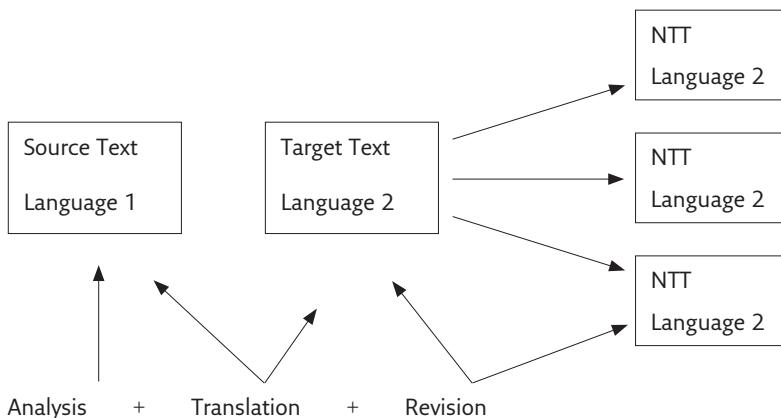


Figure 7. Textual fit of target text with not translated texts in language 2

Textual fit in translation studies and practice is comparable to the notion of intertextuality in general text studies (Neubert & Shreve 1992). The word “intertextuality” refers to the fact that texts are “already written” (Barthes 1974, 21), and that they share codes and characteristics with other texts of the same kind. This framing of texts by other texts has implications not only for the writer and reader of the original text, but also for the reader of the translated text. This is the reason why translators should be aware of the fact that they are navigating in a “double

intertextuality”, namely in a translinguistic and transcultural intertextuality.

We all carry around in our minds certain images of or templates for what a given type of text should be like. This template has been created by our experience of reading a number of texts of different kinds in our mother tongue. Thanks to these mental templates, we can immediately tell the general genre of a text, for instance a poem, a news story, a personal letter, or a scholarly text. Nevertheless, we do not always have a precise name for a certain type of text, but we still recognise it as being of one type and not another.

For translation work, this means that we need to make sure our translated texts fit into the intertextuality of the target language and target culture. They must sound natural to a reader who is a native speaker of the target language – or you might say: they must not sound “translated”. They must fit into a reader’s set of expectations of what a text of that type should be like.

So “intertextuality” describes the relationship between a certain text and all the other texts a reader has read before. To achieve intertextuality, the translator will benefit from reading other texts in the same genre as the text to be translated.

### 7.1.1 Not respecting intertextuality in Language 2

A translator can sometimes choose to let Language 1 textuality appear in Language 2. When many translators do this over time, elements of Language 1 may become incorporated in Language 2 and come to be felt as natural by readers of Language 2. This has happened in the case of Japanese during the centuries when Chinese was adopted as the written language and numerous Japanese texts were written in Chinese, but read in Japanese. Some syntactic constructions in Japanese are originally syntax loans from Chinese. It has also happened in Japan with the influx of Western culture after 1868. Medical Japanese is strongly influenced by German, and the use of the pronouns *彼 kare*, “he”, and *彼女 kanojo*, “she”, became widespread because of translations from English.

Language contact is often textual contact, and translations are instrumental in producing language change. Translations can even be an instrument for social and ideological change as happened in the Meiji period with translations of words for “freedom” and “rights” – concepts that were not linguistically present in Japanese before then (Howland 2002). In the following pages we shall concentrate on the notions of *genre* and *text type* and keep in mind the relation of textual fit of the target text with its sisters and brothers in the target text family.

## 7.2 Genre

An important factor in producing and reading texts is the immediate availability of a ready-made form, a template, into which a sender will often intuitively mould his or her wording when addressing a certain public, on a certain topic, in a certain context, with a certain function. This ready-made form will arouse certain expectations in the reader at the mere glance at the very first words and expressions. The availability of ready-made linguistic forms for the sender, and the expectations aroused by these same forms in the reader, constitute the so-called *genre signals*, that is, linguistic expressions that signal the belonging of a text to a specific *genre*.

The following examples in English and further down in Japanese illustrate the recognisability of genres. It is noticeable how few words suffice for you to recognise the genre and activate the appropriate genre expectations:

Facts about the country... (Travel guide)

Once upon a time there was an old king who had a beautiful young princess.  
(Fairytale)

Edward Said, eloquent spokesman for Palestine, died on September 25, aged 67. (Obituary)

Take four lamb chops and marinate them in vinegar and herbs for three hours. (Recipe)

Recognisable from the very beginning of the reading process, genre-characteristic features work “top-down” for the interpretation of the succeeding expressions and sentences, keeping them together within an overall frame of interpretation.

As we saw, genres are at hand for both sender and receiver, and they are extremely important in order for a smooth and correct understanding to take place. The exact rendering of genre signals is therefore an essential condition, the *sine qua non*, for a translation to be successful – unless, of course, you have opted for a global strategy of changing function and genre. What is interesting for the translation process is that the translator assumes two roles: as both sender and receiver, but in reverse order. First as the receiver of the source text, in which the genre-specific wordings have to be identified and registered. Next as the sender of the target text, for which it is necessary to ensure that the genre signals specific to the source text are rendered correctly, i.e. respecting the genre conventions of the target culture. If the target text starts with the wrong signals, which ascribe it to a quite different genre, you may impede and maybe even inhibit the new readers’ understanding of the text.

1. 昔昔のある日のこと、若者が歩いていると一羽の鶴に出会いました。  
(Fairytale)

*Mukashi mukashi no aru hi no koto, wakamono ga aruite iru to*

Ancient times ATTR certain day ATTR thing, young man SUBJ was walking when

*hitowa no tsuru ni deai mashita.*  
one ATTR crane IND OBJ met.

\*On a certain day in ancient times, a young man met a crane when he was walking.

“Once upon a time, there was a young man. He met a crane as he was walking along.”

2. 鍋に水と昆布を入れ、中火にかけ、沸騰寸前に昆布を取り出す。(Recipe)

*Nabe ni mizu to konbu wo ire, chūbi ni kake,*

Saucepan LOC water and kelp OBJ put in, medium heat LOC put on,

*Futtō sunzen ni konbu wo tori dasu.*

Boil just before LOC kelp OBJ remove

\*We put water and *konbu* kelp into a saucepan. After that, we put it on medium heat, then we remove the kelp just before it boils.

“Put water and kelp in a pot on medium heat. Remove kelp just before water boils.”

Not respecting genre signals may sometimes cause other – and more – serious problems for the reception of the target text – and hence for the translator. When translating official texts, for example, you have to respect the **register** prevalent in the target culture, and in translating legal texts such as contracts, you have to make sure that **speech acts** such as obligations and promises are correctly rendered in the target text in order for them to be acknowledged and followed as such. Translating international documents, such as treatises that are legally binding, also necessitates, for example, that directive speech acts are identified as such. Disregarding genre-specific linguistic factors may incur grim consequences.

Other problems may arise when the source text genre does not exist in the target culture. This is the case for instance with the Japanese *haiku* and the English sonnet. Other examples could be greetings that do not have any equivalent, such as いただきます *itadakimasu*, lit. “I receive”, which is said before starting to eat; or いっていらっしゃい *itte irasshai*, lit. “go and come back”, which is said instead of goodbye to persons who are leaving one’s house.

The *haiku* genre provides us with an example of a culturally determined translation phenomenon, a so-called **cultureme** (see also Chapter 4.5). A cultureme is a unit of translation that is deeply grounded in the source culture, and maybe even particular for this culture. We saw this with words such as the Japanese *ki* (“energy”) and *en* (“connection”), which evoke a specific network of semantic associations for Japanese readers, and with the word for “cherry blossoms”, *sakura*, which, for the Japanese, call to mind a whole series of cultural traditions and images. When it is

the genre that differs between two cultures, we have to do with a “**mega-cultureme**”. Culturemes are probably the hardest meaning units to transfer in the translation process, because of the often vast and vague network of associations attached to them. Since they are fundamentally untranslatable, you have to find an alternative expression for them, to explain them, or simply to leave them out. For smaller units this would, of course, be an instance of **under-translation**, but when it comes to genre, under-translating is basically not feasible, since you cannot encode a text without using linguistic expressions, which, in one way or another, would signal that the text belongs within a specific genre. The only choices are to rely on an already existing genre in the target language or to try to create a new genre. The latter has been done quite successfully with *haiku* which have come to be known as “lapidary style” or even **haiku** (in other languages than Japanese) in the West.

Genre is a way of inscribing a specific text in a textual category, defined by the linguistic features that a number of texts have in common. These **surface features** are repeated over and over again to end up forming special clusters of expressions and structures. Genre is thus a way of **categorising** texts, that is, to divide them into categories, by way of identifying linguistic expressions and constructions in the surface of the text. Another way of classifying texts is to group them according to **text types**.

### 7.3 Text types

This way of classifying exemplars of texts is to divide them according to a deeper structure, their **basic structure**, into **types** of texts. This kind of typologisation can be seen as a supplement to the classification into **genres**, which is effectuated on the basis of surface structures. The basic structure, also termed **text base**, stems from the fact stated earlier that “a text is a linguistic unit which fulfils a global communicative intent...” This overarching communicative intent conveys a pragmatic coherence to the text,

which can be defined as the ***global speech act***, or the ***prevailing function*** of the text. Depending on what the sender intends with her/his text, we can identify the following text types (Werlich 1975, Lundquist 1980, Lundquist 2008, Korzen & Lundquist 2004, 159):

If a sender wants to:

- tell a story;
- describe something;
- represent something;
- persuade the receiver;
- make the receiver do something;
- express her/his own feelings;
- commit her-/himself to an action;
- create a new situation:  
(via authority/institution)

Then we get:

- a **narrative** text type
- a **descriptive** text type
- an **expository** text type
- an **argumentative** text type
- a **directive** text type
- an **expressive** text type
- a **commisive** text type
- a **declarative** text type

Each text type can be condensed into an abstract text base, formulated as a single sentence to which the whole text can be reduced, or - seen from the opposite angle - from which the text can be said to be "generated". Thus, the different text types can be reduced to the following text bases:

### *The narrative text type*

Subject/AGENT + verb-punctual tense/ACTION + adv./TIME  
A narrative text type tells the actions of an active subject, and how these actions follow each other in time.

Japanese example:

3a. 警察の発表によると、25日にイワートンで行われた地元チームによる試合の最中、男は競技場内で銃を乱射。少女の他に3人の男性が死亡。4人が怪我を負った。男は発砲後、警備員に銃で撃たれ死亡した。

(Yahoo Japan スポーツニュース(ロイター)2005年9月27日)

*Keisatsu no happyō ni yoru to, 25 nichi ni iwaaton de okonawareta jimoto chiimu ni yoru shiai no saichū,*

Police POSS announcement according to, the 25th LOC Ewarton LOC was held local team by match ATTR during,

*otoko ha kyōgijyō nai jyū wo ransha.*

man TOP stadium inside gun OBJ fire at random

*Shōjyo no hoka ni san nin no dansei ga shibō.*

*Yo nin ga kega wo ottā.*

Young girl ATTR other 3 people ATTR male SUBJ died.

4 people SUBJ injury OBJ got

*Otoko ha happō go, keibiin ni jyū de utare shibō shita.*

Man TOP fire a gun after, guard AGENT gun by was shot died.

“According to a police announcement, a man fired a gun randomly inside the stadium during a local match in Ewarton on the 25th. Other than a young girl, 3 people were killed and 4 were injured. The man was shot to death by a guard after he fired the gun.”

English example:

3b. On a summer's night, four migrant workers broke into a vineyard in a western suburb of Beijing and helped themselves to the plump ripening grapes. Little did they know that the grapes were the fruit of a special hybrid experiment, funded by the government. ...

It took very little time for the police to arrest the four suspects. One ... was released after 15 days.

*The descriptive text type*

Subject/PATIENT + verb-durative tense/STATE + adv./  
PLACE

A descriptive text type describes how and where an object (PATIENT) is located in space.

Japanese example:

4a. 大阪城は現在の大阪市中央区の大阪城公園で、上町台地の北端に位置する。

『 Wikipedia (http://ja.wikipedia.org/)「大阪城」』

Ōsaka jyō ha genzai no ōsaka shi chūōku no ōsaka  
kōen de,

Osaka castle TOP present ATTR Osaka city Central District ATTR Osaka  
park LOC,

Jyōmachi daichi no kitabata ni ichi suru.

Jyōmachi Daichi ATTR north end LOC places.

“The Osaka Castle is situated at the northern edge of Jyōmachi Daichi, in  
the Osaka Castle Park in the Central District of the present Osaka City.”

English example:

4b. Tokyo Metropolitan Museum ... lies in pleasant gardens.

*The expository text type*

Subject/PATIENT + verb-copula + predicate/STATE

An expository text type represents what an item (PATIENT) is  
or consists of.

Japanese example:

5a. お盆とは、日本で夏に行なわれる祖先の靈を祀る行事である。

『 Wikipedia (<http://ja.wikipedia.org/>)「お盆」』

Obon to ha, nihon de natsu ni okonawareru

Obon QUOT TOP Japan LOC summer LOC is held

sosen no rei wo matsuru gyōji de aru.

ancestor POSS spirit OBJ celebrate event COPULA.

“*Obon* is an event held in summer in Japan to celebrate ancestral spirits.”

English example:

5b. Japan is divided into nine political regions and further subdivided into 47  
smaller divisions. Prefectures or *ken* make up 43 of these divisions.

*The argumentative text type*

Subject/PATIENT + NEGATION + verb

An argumentative text negates a point of view that has been claimed by an earlier real or imagined “antagonist”.

Japanese example:

6a. 社会の制度の不備として考えるだけでは済まない。

『天声人語 1991年6月8日』

shakai no seido no fubi toshite kangaeru dake de  
ha sumanai.

Society ATTR system ATTR deficiency as think of only COPULA  
TOP enough-not.

“It is not enough just to think of it as a deficiency in the social system.”

English example:

6b. **Real justice**

The death sentence meted out to terrorists for the Bali bombings might be seen as justice, but it is not. ... Let them live with their sentencing. There is no justice in death.

*The directive text type*Verb/DO-imperative/2<sup>nd</sup> PERSONA directive text type issues a command, telling the receiver (2<sup>nd</sup> person) what to do.

Japanese example:

7a. この取扱説明書はいつでも取り出せるところに保管してください。

Kono toriatsukai setsumeisho ha itsudemo tori daseru tokoro ni hokan shite kudasai.

This handling manual TOP always take out-can place LOC  
keep please.

“Please keep this instruction manual accessible at all times.”

English example:

7b. Take the east exit of Meguro, walk straight ahead along Megurodori, and look out for the museum to the left.

*The expressive text type*

Subject/1<sup>st</sup> PERSON + verb/PERCEPTION

In the expressive text type the sender (1<sup>st</sup> person) expresses what he perceives (to be good or bad).

Japanese example:

8a. 休みがほしい。

*Yasumi ga hoshii.*

Holiday OBJ want.

“I want a holiday.”

English example:

8b. I hate computers!

*The commissive text type*

Subject/1<sup>st</sup> PERSON + verb-present/future tense/ACTION + object/1<sup>st</sup> person.

In the commissive text type, the sender (1<sup>st</sup> person) commits or obliges her-/himself (object/1<sup>st</sup> person) to some future action.

Japanese example:

9a. 私は利用規約に同意する。

*Watashi ha riyō kisoku ni dōi suru.*

I TOP use regulation IND OBJ consent.

“I consent to the rules for usage.”

English example:

9b. I do hereby promise to use these texts only for purposes of research or study.

*The declarative text type*

Subject/1<sup>st</sup> PERSON + verb/DECLARATIVE, present tense

In the declarative text type the sender (1<sup>st</sup> person, singular or plural), who possesses a certain authority, declares what is to count as reality.

Japanese example:

10a. 被爆 60 周年を迎えた今、原子爆弾で亡くなられた方々の御靈の平安を  
祈り、私たちは、広島とともに、核兵器廃絶と世界恒久平和に向けて、決し  
てあきらめることなく努力することを宣言します。

『2005年 長崎平和宣言』<sup>5</sup>

*Hibaku rokujyū shūnen wo mukaeta ima, genshi bakudan de  
be hit by a nuclear bomb 60 anniversary OBJ face now, atomic  
bomb CAUS*

*nakunarareta katagata no gorei no heian wo inori,  
watashi tachi ha,*

*passed away-honorific people POSS honorific-soul ATTR peace OBJ  
pray, I PLUR TOP,*

*hiroshima to tomo ni, kaku heiki haizetsu to sekai kōkyū  
heiwa ni mukete,*

*Hiroshima INCL together, nuclear weapon abolition INCL world per-  
petual peace DIR aim,*

*kesshite akirameru koto naku doryoku suru koto wo sengen shimasu.  
never give up thing not be endeavour thing OBJ declare.*

“Today, as we face the 60th anniversary of the atomic bomb attack, we  
pray for the souls of those who passed away. We, together with Hiro-  
shima, declare that we shall never give up our endeavours towards the

<sup>5</sup> [http://www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/abm/heiwaseigen/sengen\\_j.htm](http://www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/abm/heiwaseigen/sengen_j.htm). Accessed July 2007.

abolition of nuclear weapons, and the establishment of perpetual world peace.”

English example:

10b. I pronounce you man and wife.

Text types can be conceived of as superordinate to genres in that a given text base covers several different genres. Thus the narrative text type comprises genres such as novels, biographies, news, sport reportages, etc. Descriptive texts are found in tourist guides, drug inserts, etc. Expository texts cover genres such as textbooks, scientific articles, encyclopaedic articles, etc. Argumentative texts are found in editorials, political propaganda, debates, etc. Directives are seen in a wide range of genres, such as warnings, instructions, orders, law texts and the like, while expressive texts are seen in letters, poems, confessions, etc. Finally, commissive texts are typical of genres such as contracts and other promises, and declarative texts are found in for instance rituals and legal language.

However, text types are not only superordinate to genres, but also subordinate, in that they can form parts of texts. In fact, a text may contain sequences which can be characterised as belonging to dissimilar text types, each of which can be ascribed to a specific text base. This is the case when, for example, a novel alternates between narrative and descriptive sequences, or when an advertisement contains directive sequences (“Buy/vote for X”), descriptive and expository sequences (“X is/has been/consists of Y”), and argumentative sequences (“X is better/cheaper, etc., than Z”).

Categorisation of texts into text types and their characterisation via an abstract text base are useful in translation in several respects. First, it is essential to identify the text type of the source text in order to create and maintain the correct pragmatic coherence needed to interpret it correctly. Second, the superordinate text type to which a text belongs is an effective tool for determining which global strategy of translation to adopt (see

below). Third, a text base can serve to check that the correct text type is maintained throughout the process of translation, or that a transformation between text types is made in the target text if the source text indicates such alternations. And, fourth and finally, the text base description in terms of a basic sentence formula can help both identify its linguistic realisations in the textual surface of the source text, and assure that the sentence formula is translated into adequate expressions in the target language.

## 7.4 The final touch

Once the genre and text type fit of the target text has been checked, it is time to let the target text rest. This is necessary for the translator to clear his or her mind and meet the text with the fresh eyes of the new, green reader. Translators should put themselves in a position in which they can re-read the text and get an authentic feeling of its *readability*.

Readability is not only a question of being able to construct meaning from a text, to imagine a plausible mental representation with the correct number of discourse referents and the right type of relations between them. It is also a question of the text being *natural* for the reader. People reading texts in their mother tongue are enormously aware of even small distortions, which immediately tell them that they are reading a translated text, and which, in the worst case, might divert them from the message intended – intended by the author as well as by the translator.

Translators are, as any other text producers, responsible for the text they send on the market; but compared to text producers, who design texts from scratch, translators are in a particular situation because they are bound by the wording of the source text. This may put restrictions on their linguistic creativity and feeling for characteristics of the target language and its use in texts.

Close adherence to the source text often shows up as the target text becoming less fluent. This is typically a result of an

inadequate ordering of information via a ***word order*** which does not respect the natural flow of texts in the target text family. An unusual and marked word order may impede an effortless reading rhythm. ***Rhythm*** is, indeed, not only important for gaining access to literary texts, prose and poems; it is of significance for a smooth reading and understanding of all texts.

# Postscript

Throughout this book, we have insisted that an understanding of different units of translation can help determine translation strategies at different levels. Thus, mega-units as the “text-in-context” determine whether the global strategy should be more or less close to the faithful or the unfaithful end of the fidelity scale. Local strategies intervene at the level of macro-units, such as presenting and linking information across sentences, just as micro-units, such as semes, words and phrases also call for local strategies.

Furthermore, throughout the book, we have tended to recommend functional translation strategies rather than literal ones. We have generally set the readability of the target text in Language 2 as the main goal of the translation. This is a global strategy close to the one advocated in the so-called *skopos* theory, which recommends that the translator first of all respect the *skopos*, that is, the purpose or function of the translated text *vis a vis* its target readers. This leads on to a “coherence rule”, which has also been given a prominent place in our book. It has been fundamental to our perception of translation here where we have adopted the viewpoint that a translated text should be “sufficiently coherent to allow the intended users to comprehend it, given their assumed background knowledge and situational circumstances” (Baker 1998, 236).

However, a radically contrary position also deserves mention. It was defended by the great translator of the European romantic age, the German philosopher, philologist, translator and translation theorist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), for whom the main reasons to translate were to “make known the original to those who lack the relevant linguistic knowledge” (of the source language), and who “want to acquire an in-depth knowledge

of the text" in order "to enter into the spirit of the work" (Vega 1990, 493). Firmly anchored in the belief that "language is the shaping organ of thought" (*ibid.*, 489), Humboldt realised that establishing perfect equivalence between two expressions in two different languages was in fact an impossibility, since there would always be differences in the connotations evoked. Instead he recommended a "simple fidelity" strategy, by which he meant "fidelity to the *overall* (general) nature of the original, not to its peculiarities" (*ibid.*, 492). So he implied, in other words, that if a translator were to focus only on getting the small peculiarities right, he would lose sight of the overall generality of the text, and *vice versa*.

Humboldt also recommended that a translation should effectively register certain "strange" components in the new form it was obliged to adopt. Such "strange elements" would enrich the translation and eventually also the target language as a whole. Humboldt expressed this clearly in the following remark (translated by us from French) about translating Chinese texts, which shows his conviction that a translation should keep traces of the original language – otherwise there would be no reason to translate in the first place!:

If you reduce Chinese idioms to our (German) phraseology, you are unfaithful to the Chinese language, because this language has an absolutely different nature. [...] It is the language we want to know, and it is apparently incoherent. As for the Chinese, we do not need to learn that they structure their thoughts as we do, that their logic and general grammar is the same; what interests us is to know how they realise the same goals as us, but with an entirely different instrument. Therefore, you have to leave in this difference, without altering it.<sup>6</sup>

For Humboldt it was thus a sign of excellence in translation when a translator managed to convey the overall meaning of the text

---

6 Humboldt, letter to Abel-Rémusat 1827, in Humboldt 2000, 26.

while still faithfully creating literal translations of some words and expressions, which could thereby expand and enrich the target language and its culture.

Humboldt was obviously not writing about translations of manuals or contemporary legal or scientific documents, but about the great classical literature, in casu for instance the *Yi Qing* (“the book of changes”) or the works by the philosophers Meng Zi, Zhuang Zi or Lao Zi. Since such books were primarily translated to give the educated European public an impression of how other cultured people saw and interpreted the world, it was important not to make it sound just like any other European novel or treatise on philosophy.

The Chinese translators at the end of the 19th century had a different view and happily took European novels and dramas and rewrote them in a Chinese setting with a Chinese morale, intended as entertainment for the general Chinese public.

Translation today has become more important than ever before. In a world that wants to call itself “globalised”, and in which multiple different languages coexist, accurate and readable translations are the only bulwark against misunderstandings and conflicts. It is no longer enough to translate the great literary classics for each other’s enjoyment. Almost everything we say and write may at some point need to be translated correctly and unambiguously.

There is still room for the artistic translation of literature and poetry, but it has become overshadowed by the overwhelming need for immediate intercultural communication about the many aspects of modern global life that we are intimately involved in. The extreme positions on the functional-literal scale have therefore become untenable in favour of a compromise leaning mostly towards the functional end.

Nevertheless, we wish to conclude that it is still very much up to the expertise, intuition and wit of the translator to strike the difficult balance between respecting the original language, tone

and connotations, and the target readers' linguistic competence, background knowledge, motivations and interest in reading translated text.

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